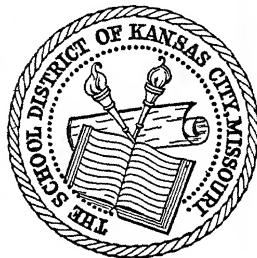


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P L A N N I N G F O R L I B R A R Y S E R V I C E M A R K E T

*A National Plan for
Public Library Service*

P L A N N I N G F O R L I B R A R I E S

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Planning Children's Library Services.

A National Plan for Public Library Service

Prepared for the Committee
on Postwar Planning of the
American Library Association

by

CARLETON B. JOECKEL

and

AMY WINSLOW

WITH A CHAPTER BY
LOWELL MARTIN

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Chicago, 1948

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Foreword

THIS book can change the course of the Public Library Movement in North America. In particular, it can hasten the day when there will be no millions without good local public library service. But the book will not do it unaided. From here on the success of this planning effort will rest primarily with the state library organizations and library extension agencies.

It must be gratifying to the members of the Committee—and the kind of reward they would most desire—to learn that even before the book is published, many states are busy translating the National Plan into action programs suited to their local needs.

It is a pleasure on behalf of the whole Association to thank the Committee for its hard work and for its very useful product.

CARL H. MILAM
Executive Secretary
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Preface

WITH the publication of this *National Plan for Public Library Service*, the American Library Association's Committee on Postwar Planning concludes the third and last stage of its proposals for an over-all postwar program for the American public library.¹ The essential first step was the formulation of a statement of public library standards. This was completed in 1943, when *Post-War Standards for Public Libraries* was published. The second stage was that of inventory and evaluation of present library service in terms of the standards. While not separately published, much of the data collected for this purpose has been summarized in Chapter II of this report, under the caption, "Taking Stock of the American Public Library." The final stage is the plan itself. After much preliminary testing, this is now submitted for the consideration of librarians, library trustees and public officials, and the interested American public generally.

In drafting the plan, the authors have been confronted by the difficult problem of striking a proper balance between realism and vision. Realism may be claimed for the plan since it proposes nothing impossible. Its recommendations, in the main, are extensions to the nation of patterns of organization and service already in effect in many good libraries. On the other hand, the plan may be characterized as visionary because the sweeping changes it recommends in the American public library system are far in advance of present conditions in many states and local units. This is the usual dilemma of public institutions generally. They progress unevenly, depending upon the energy and inspiration of their own personnel, the good will and financial resources of the governments which support them, and the public interest they arouse. Nevertheless, plans are needed be-

¹Plans for special types of services within the public library are under way. See p. ii.

PREFACE



cause they document and define the national goals of service.

The plan is presented in three principal parts. It begins by contrasting the ideals of dynamic library service, as described in Chapter I, with present-day realities, as appraised in Chapter II. The core of the plan is contained in the second part, comprising Chapters III to VII. These chapters outline a proposed *system* of public libraries and integrated library functions designed to provide a high level of service throughout the nation. Although the plan places primary responsibility on the local library units, it is national in scope and suggests in detail the appropriate roles of the state and national governments in the library economy. The third part, Chapters VIII-XII, implements the basic scheme by consideration of a number of related topics: library collections, personnel, buildings, citizen interest, and research projects. Chapter XIII is a brief summary of the whole plan.

The completion of this planning project has been a fine example of cooperative effort. From the beginning of its work on public library standards in 1942, the Committee on Postwar Planning has relied heavily on advice and suggestions from a group of public librarians, library extension workers, and other librarians. The formal preparation of the National Plan began at a group conference held in Chicago in 1944, at which chapter outlines were prepared in some detail. Since that time, preliminary drafts of the plan and other materials have been sent to many librarians for criticism and suggested revisions. The Committee is greatly indebted to the many individuals who have collaborated in the various stages of its work.

Special thanks are due to the Library Service Division of the United States Office of Education and to the Public Library Office of the American Library Association for the opportunity to use advance copies of compilations of recent public library statistics.

Copies of the first seven chapters of the plan were distributed to all members of the American Library Association Council in advance of the Buffalo Conference in June, 1946. On June 21, the Council approved the document and authorized its completion.

Although the preparation of this report has thus been a cooperative project, actual responsibility for the authorship of the plan in its present form must fall upon the individuals named on the title page.

PREFACE

The first chapter was written by Dr. Lowell Martin; and Miss Amy Winslow and the undersigned collaborated in drafting the remaining chapters.

The soundness of the proposals made in these pages will be tested by time and experience. The plan is a preliminary sketch rather than a detailed working drawing of the public library structure of the future. That structure will be built in many parts, in many places, by many individuals. The Committee on Postwar Planning presents its proposals with due recognition of their limitations in the hope that they may prove useful to all those, librarians and many others, who are responsible for the development of better public library service throughout the nation.

CARLETON B. JOECKEL, *Chairman*

University of California

August, 1947

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The Potential Role of the American Public Library

LOWELL MARTIN

IN BROAD outline the requisites of the American educational system are simple. We need homes and communities which foster character, personality, and social responsibility. We need schools which impart the skills of learning, the heritage of knowledge, and the rudiments of a vocation. We need agencies which provide adults with the information, ideas, and beauty which are the essentials of a full life and a responsible citizenry.

This is the system toward which America strives. It is the doctrine to which our concept of the individual and the state commits us. And it is the solution on which we depend in the face of an ever more complex society. If we achieve it, America will have citizens of understanding, individuals of culture, and persons of economic competence.

The educational program is weakest at the adult level. The average adult is well supplied with facts about current events by means of newspapers and the radio. Interpretation of current events is provided by the few magazines he reads and the few books he buys. If he lives in a favored community, he may attend formal classes and lectures for adults. But for the most part the communication of information and ideas is haphazard, fragmentary, and biased. We are an educated people lacking the means for gaining the fruits of education in adult life.

The function of the American public library is to mediate between seekers for knowledge and the recorded materials which contain and promote knowledge. It is therefore pertinent to examine the public library as an organ of social democracy and an instrument of

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personal self-realization. Is the institution adequate to its task? Does it show promise of playing a prominent role in the educational system? What must be done to enable it to realize its potentialities? These questions present themselves not to librarians alone but to the leaders of the nation and to all persons interested in the American ideal.

THE AMERICAN LIBRARY IN ACTION

When people obtain and use the materials of information, interpretation, and aesthetic expression suited to their needs and abilities, lifelong education becomes a reality. But most people cannot afford to buy the materials they need. Most would not know what to buy if they could afford them. And many would not have access to a source of supply even if they had money and knowledge for the purchase.

The American people have long been conscious of their need for access to the record of man's accumulated experience, and they have tried to meet it by various cooperative methods. Even before the Revolution individuals banded together to form reading circles and group libraries; wealthy persons early opened their private collections to townsfolk; and commercial agencies, operated for profit, tried to meet the need. The public library is the modern solution of the problem.

The public library gathers the materials of enlightenment needed by the residents of each local community. It organizes the materials for effective use. It personally aids users in finding and interpreting materials.

The unit result is not spectacular—merely an individual, seated in a library or in his home, absorbing wisdom and beauty from a book suited to his interests and abilities. But multiplied a million-fold in every section of the country, the result is significant in the eternal search for personal fulfillment and a better group life.

The director of training of an industrial concern enters the science and technology department of a library in a large eastern city; he consults a technology librarian about his problem of training a group of men in a new fabricating process; in one hour he leaves with pamphlets, diagrams, and films that will enrich his instruction. A

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discharged veteran enters the library building in a California town; he carries a mimeographed sheet headed "Opportunities in Aviation," given him by a discharge officer; under the guidance of an information librarian he is soon settled with authoritative information from vocational counseling agencies on opportunities and requirements in aviation and with trade journals from which he can judge actual trends. An aged couple wait by a gate along a country lane in the South; a truck with books inside and out drives up, and a professional librarian steps down; the old people select several books on gardening, a topic of great importance to them.

A librarian stands before a labor union meeting in a great metropolis; a pile of books and pamphlets is on the table beside him; he describes materials on labor history, on group leadership, on economic theory; when the meeting is over, a dozen men leave with items that have caught their interest. A librarian begins the second of her talks before the parent-teacher group in a suburb; the topic is "What are your children reading?"; discussion is quick and serious; books are opened, passed around, evaluated. Thirty neighbors gather round a large table in the basement of a library in a small town; they carry library copies of a book they have all read; under the librarian's direction a spirited discussion of the book begins.

This is not the average American public library in action. This is the best, and the best is far above the average. But the best has been achieved in some communities, and it could be achieved in every part of the country. The first hard truth that confronts an observer of American public libraries is that they have stopped far short of their potential. The second truth is that at isolated places, and in partial fashion, they have performed an educational function that is unique and significant.

Consider the strategic position of the public library. In thousands of communities the only public recourse the adult has when he seeks to know, to understand, to appreciate, is his local free library. It reaches into more parts and corners of the land than any other institution for adult education, providing a lane of communication among men and peoples.

Consider its resources. The public library is founded on the printed page, the form of communication most suited to individual

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study, tailor-made to each reader, adjustable to the time and pace that suit his fancy and ability. It supplements the printed page with whatever forms of communication—films, recordings, speech—prove effective, either as a means of education in their own right or as a stimulus to use print as a means of education. It is the one agency that has time and ability to assemble the best from the output of the printing presses and the film laboratories—rejecting the inaccurate, the shoddy, the dull, selecting the authoritative, the aesthetic, the interesting.

Consider its service program. The public library is one of the few institutions that provide educational service to adults as a central function rather than as an appendage to other tasks. Schools are primarily for children, churches for religion, labor unions for economic betterment. But the public library is the major agency of enlightenment for adults. And it is a source of recorded experience for children as they grow into adulthood. The public library is one of the few agencies that exist to serve their constituents and not to advance a cause or sell a product.

Great business houses, governmental bodies, educational institutions—all have their own special libraries. But for the little businessman, the citizens' reform group, the neighborhood discussion club, the many associations of modern life, there is only the local library. Schools have their own teachers. For the individual mature student there are only the "faculty" of authors in his community library and the librarian to stimulate and guide their use.

THE ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE LIBRARY SERVICE

A library is a collection of materials suited in content and organization to the needs of a reading group. The American public library is a community agency containing the materials required by local residents to realize their potentialities as individuals and citizens, arranged and interpreted to facilitate use.

PROVIDING MATERIALS FOR THE PEOPLE

The impact of a library as a service institution depends in the last analysis on the scope and quality of its stock in trade. In a sense, the people have said to the librarian, "We need many materials—to help

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us understand public questions, build our homes and families, engage in our vocations, enjoy our leisure time. Get them for us."

The need, whether in Farmville or New York, includes, but extends beyond, classics and the best current novels. If a library can supply only these, it will not realize the potentiality of the public library but will merely duplicate the corner newsstand and the unused home library. The need extends to the many aspects of life in which knowledge is useful. It includes the specialized request of the hobby enthusiast or the perplexed parent as well as the generalized request of the citizen at election time. We shall not have an adequate educational system until every person in the country has access to the materials for a life of reason.

Books continue to be a prime source of information and inspiration. They still provide the most complete treatment of the problems that confront man. But a collection of books alone would lack many important items of reading matter. Ours is as much an age of the pamphlet and the magazine. Taking advantage of newer media of communication, ours may also become an age of the educational film and the sound recording. Such materials are increasing in volume and significance, they are difficult to select, and some of them are expensive. Society needs an agency of selection and supply for these materials. The public library, with its central aim of diffusing knowledge, is the logical candidate for this role.

In planning for library service to America it is useful to note three levels of required materials, distinguished by scope and quantity of use.

There are, first, the materials needed in practically every American community, sources of information on topics of current general interest (national affairs, for example) and the significant books of contemporary literature.

A second group is composed of materials not required in every community but which, when needed at all, are in sufficient demand locally to justify the purchase of at least one copy by a library serving ten or twenty thousand people. The "core" material and the "local interest" material should be accessible to every citizen in his own neighborhood.

A third group is composed of materials which, while not research

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or scientific in nature, are sufficiently specialized that only one or relatively few readers may want them. These may be on the special hobbies or interests which people develop, the personal problems they face, the unusual vocational interests they follow. Only the larger libraries can afford such materials; the smaller libraries can neither afford nor justify their purchase. This is not a serious handicap if local libraries have a "second line of defense," in the form of state and region-wide libraries to which they can turn when special items are needed. The American library system will be incomplete until materials at this, as well as more popular levels, are available on a nation-wide basis.

A library is not successfully providing materials for the people merely because it happens to have a half-dozen cases of books and a file of pamphlets. It is not successfully providing materials merely because it has one or a few copies of publications currently in the limelight. It is successfully providing materials if it has most of the sources of knowledge and significant books of the day needed locally for intelligent citizenship and personal fulfillment, a sufficient duplication of such sources to supply local demands when they are fresh, and a means for procuring specialized materials when required. The American public library should be at once an individual local institution and a part of a nation-wide materials distribution system.

DISTRIBUTING MATERIALS TO THE PEOPLE

The distinguishing characteristic of the American public library is its emphasis on bringing materials and services close to people. Branches extend the larger institutions out from business centers to local neighborhoods. Traveling collections carry books into hospitals, prisons, and welfare agencies. Bookmobiles bring materials from central libraries out into small towns and rural areas.

The aim of local accessibility poses a basic problem of library extension. If local accessibility is overemphasized in many minute and isolated libraries, each is unable, for lack of facilities and personnel, to play its proper role in the educational scheme. Larger library units, in which local reading centers give each other mutual aid and strength, are therefore a means of improving library service.

Contemporary society is served by many institutions and groups,

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public and private, formal and informal, which tend to integrate forces working for the collective welfare. A portion of each person's life is associated with such groups—in his business organization or labor union, in his art group or hobby club, in his civic association or church class. Economic groups, whether of business, management, labor, or consumers, increasingly face problems requiring organized knowledge. Civic and government organizations, planning or reforming or legislating, have the same need. Welfare agencies should be added to the list, and the cultural groups in which people seek aesthetic enjoyment. Religious centers, as they embark on social and educational programs, also have need for library materials.

At the meetings of these many associations potential readers, with common interests, are gathered conveniently and stimulated to investigate further. Instead of passively waiting for such people to seek out the library later, effective service anticipates needs and brings materials to the group, making them accessible when the stimulus to read is fresh.

Libraries do not distribute materials successfully merely by setting up an efficient system of circulation records. They distribute materials successfully when their facilities are made available to potential readers in outlets convenient to their daily round of economic and social life and to potential readers when they gather for purposes of intellectual or artistic stimulation.

HELPING PEOPLE TO USE MATERIALS

In library service that makes a difference in the life of the community, the function of supply occupies only a portion of the librarian's skill and attention. Far more time is given to facilitating each individual's search for enlightenment. Few people have sufficient knowledge of materials to be able to find, without help, the specific books or pamphlets or films suited to their needs. The librarian helps the search by arrangement of materials, analysis of materials, personal aid, and information service. By these means the librarian mobilizes his books for action.

GUIDANCE BY PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENT.—In arrangement of materials the librarian possesses an opportunity and a responsibility which go far toward determining reading. Users of public libraries depend

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in great measure on the arrangement of materials and find, or fail to find, enlightenment according to the librarian's skill in this regard. Books displayed prominently will be used heavily; placed on an obscure shelf they will be overlooked. Materials related to other similar publications will contribute to educational growth; isolated, their cumulative effect will be lost.

For logical arrangement of materials, libraries use book classification schemes and usually group materials by subject fields of knowledge. As need arises, items assigned to separated subject areas are temporarily regrouped to meet a current interest. Semipermanent groupings into enduring interest areas—home life, civic affairs, vocations, hobbies—mark the library which attempts to reflect its community in book arrangements.

The criterion of physical arrangement of materials is facilitation of use. Because the approach to popular educational reading varies as current interests change (in the shift from war to peace, for example), schemes for the arrangement of materials in libraries should be flexible and sensitive to shifting interests. This requirement raises a problem of reader-adjusted organization of recorded knowledge which few libraries have yet solved.

GUIDANCE BY ANALYSIS OF MATERIALS.—By his selection of materials the librarian identifies from among the vast output of items those useful to his community. However, any one individual will have need for only a small portion of the community supply. Readers experience difficulty in selecting from a large collection the few books of value to them. An element in effective library service is description and evaluation of individual items to facilitate personal selection.

The standard method for accomplishing this is the card catalog. This tool provides an index to collections by furnishing information for locating specific items. It supplies in convenient form descriptive material, primarily bibliographic in nature, about single books. It analyzes reading materials in terms of the subjects treated. Many readers find the card catalog a valuable aid for identifying and locating items.

Other readers, however, find the bibliographic and subject information of the catalog inadequate for their purposes. They seek infor-

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mation about reading level, quality level, and relation to similar materials for any potential reading item. They seek information which will identify publications, separating them not only from quite different publications in other subject areas but separating each from similar items of its own group.

Such information is needed for the protection as well as the guidance of users. In selecting materials the librarian must sometimes choose items which have inaccuracies among otherwise useful content, which make dull and difficult reading even though rich in ideas, which duplicate materials already held, which fail to achieve the highest levels of taste. Librarianship is essentially a process of evaluation conducted by standards of excellence and need. The details of evaluation should be passed on to the reader.

The device employed to record information not furnished on catalog cards is the book annotation. This is most commonly placed in books or on reading lists. It is occasionally placed on catalog cards, where it enhances the value of the catalog as a tool for guiding profitable reading. Book annotations in libraries often lack the critical evaluation, identification of individuality, and relation to other materials, which readers require. In whatever form provided, descriptive and evaluative annotations of individual items, enabling readers to make intelligent selections, are an essential element of effective public library service.

Librarians group books which are alike in content by means of subject cataloging, which analyzes each publication. The subject catalog, the record of this analysis, provides the reader with an inventory of resources more complete and convenient than that furnished by inspection of books on the shelves. Another technique aimed at the same purpose is the compilation of reading lists on specific subjects of interest. This device has advantages of flexibility and selectivity: reading lists can be more readily distributed, they can stress topics of immediate current interest, and they can select items suitable to known readers. The test of such lists is the extent to which they are directed, in content and distribution, at specific reading groups.

GUIDANCE BY PERSONAL SERVICE.—The variety of reading matter and the variety of readers are astounding. Both in readers and materi-

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als, variations occur in purpose, interest, reading level, and background of knowledge. Educational growth by means of reading does not occur more often in adults because of lack of suitability of book to person. Many a venture in self-education, conceived in hope and enthusiasm, falters for lack of such balance.

The task of the consulting or reading librarian is to match the variations of persons and materials in each reading experience. Whether in recommending a single reading or a systematic program of study, this task is one of the most difficult in the whole field of education. But when it is accomplished, the requisites of profitable communication are met.

To achieve this purpose, a library must have personnel widely skilled in materials, equally skilled in analyzing education needs, and readily available to seekers. Such specialists may concentrate on individual reading problems as readers' advisers; they may serve groups as community workers and children's advisers; they may specialize in content areas as subject librarians; they might work in interest areas as librarians for citizens, for consumers, for family life, for vocational interests. But whatever the form, personal guidance by qualified personnel is necessary if a library is to be an intellectual force. Such guidance helps to bridge the gap between the seekers and the sources of knowledge.

Library-sponsored group activities provide a specialized form of library reading guidance designed to stimulate use of materials. Some agencies have used book reviews, forums, and film showings with telling effect. Librarians are leading book discussion groups which analyze publications of the ages or materials of current import. The aim of these activities is to motivate purposeful reading.

Service to children represents one of the most distinctive guidance functions of the public library. Children turn to the library for help in preparing school assignments, for skill in acquiring knowledge from an organized collection of materials, and for voluntary contact with literature that satisfies their curiosity and imagination. As school libraries become more adequate, lesson needs will be served primarily within the school. But no matter how excellent the school facilities, both schools and public libraries must continue as partners in promoting library skill, the one in a setting suited to the school,

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the other in a setting similar to that of adult life. And the children's room in the public library, with its informality and freedom, will remain the main center of voluntary contact with literature. Libraries have developed this portion of their programs to a considerable degree of specialization, with a personnel trained in a special literature, a special reading psychology, and special guidance techniques.

GUIDANCE BY INFORMATION SERVICE.—When libraries advise readers in the selection of materials, they are providing reading guidance service. When libraries supply facts (rather than the means for acquiring facts), they are providing information service.

Facts are needed in many aspects of life. A businessman telephones for the facts about the potential market in another city. A factory purchasing agent wants facts about sources of a new commodity. A labor union official needs facts about the cost of living. A mother wants facts about sources of Vitamin A. A voter requests facts about candidates for office. A discussion leader wants facts about the veto powers in the charter of the United Nations. A home-owner needs facts about waterproofing a basement.

There are many fields in which public libraries serve as clearing houses, compiling and organizing information not otherwise readily available. Most obvious are the gathering of historical information about a region and information about near-by educational opportunities. This same service might be extended to facts about local industries and cultural and recreational groups. It has been extended to consumer and vocational information.

The effective library has the necessary sources of information. It has personnel which on short notice can extract specific facts from sources. It anticipates questions of current import and has the answers ready. In short, the public library serves as the intelligence unit in the American community.

THE DYNAMICS OF EFFECTIVE LIBRARY SERVICE

The preceding elements alone will not insure effective library service. A library may possess the ingredients of service—suitable materials, a trained staff, a distribution system—and still fail in its high function. Attributes become accomplishments only under the whip of purpose. Dynamic library service will come only from leadership

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by individuals with a sense of purpose, a sense of the reading process, and a sense of community identification.

SENSE OF PURPOSE

An institution which educates has an explicit concept of improvements which it aims to foster in its constituents. No matter how extensive its facilities, an agency which has not adopted objectives for removing ignorance, intolerance, and insensibility is not an educational institution but a supply source for whoever decides to make demands upon it.

Starting from the innocuous proposition that their purpose is to serve the people, some libraries find themselves in the position of providing what the people want—which is precisely the function of any commercial agency. Fearing to lead rather than follow their constituents, some libraries find themselves in an anomalous position, disregarded by the very citizens they aspire to serve. Libraries furnish recreational reading materials, but they are not the prime source for such materials; they provide educational services, but they are not the major center of such services; they disseminate information, but they are not the main source of community intelligence. For lack of clear-cut objectives some public libraries dissipate rich resources without appreciable effect.

Yet in practice all public libraries exhibit some sense of purpose. If libraries based their programs solely on majority demand, they would be filled with comic books, confession magazines, and sex stories. They continually reject items which many people read. Unfortunately, the sense of purpose thus revealed is often so vague that neither librarian nor reader can report the function of the public library in concrete terms, and so all-inclusive that energy and attention are diffused.

Adoption of explicit purposes by public libraries does not mean denying accepted traditions, championing strange doctrines, or taking sides in controversial issues. In a democracy the objectives of educational institutions are limited by the values which the people adopt. No community would long endure a school or library which undermined accepted notions of the individual and the state.

Adoption of explicit purposes by public libraries does mean a

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conscious dedication of resources to specific objectives that can be translated into action. The aim of changing the indifference and ignorance of the individual as a voting citizen is neither subversive nor bureaucratic; neither are the purposes of promoting tolerance by means of knowledge concerning peoples, of providing complete vocational guidance information, of promoting appreciation of the cultural output of the twentieth century, of fostering intelligence in consumers. The benefits at this moment of seven thousand public libraries devoting themselves to the dissemination of comprehensive, unbiased, forceful information about atomic energy, or about world organization for peace, would be invaluable.

A few public libraries, recognizing the pitfalls inherent in too many worthy purposes and the ease with which meager funds can be dissipated, favor selected objectives, while de-emphasizing others that may be equally meritorious. One library, conceiving its main purpose to be service to formal and informal groups, has achieved the position of materials center for the civic and cultural associations in its area. Another has selected the role of being source and stimulus for knowledge in political and social affairs and has promoted a variety of individual and group activities to this end. Still another emphasizes the task of rebuilding a degenerating neighborhood. Some agencies have taken a few steps toward limiting goals by dedicating themselves exclusively to supplying "significant" publications.

No one of these institutions has the one correct public library program. But each, having concentrated its energies, has enhanced its influence. Its role has become evident, and its disappearance would cripple one phase of local life. The smaller the library, and most American public libraries are small, the greater the necessity for selecting a limited number of objectives for emphasis.

The central problem of dynamic library service is leadership by means of conscious objectives. The public library will assume its rightful place in the educational system when its service is unified and concentrated under the banner of purpose. Only then can its limited light be so conserved that some men may see, and only thus will it eventually have enough light to help all men. Any less incisive program courts social ineffectiveness, public indifference and financial starvation.

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SENSE OF THE READING PROCESS

Libraries achieve their purposes by means of effective communication, usually in the process of reading. Understanding of the reading process is, therefore, to the librarian what understanding of the fabricating process is to the manufacturer, of the consuming process to the distributor, and the learning process to the teacher. Techniques in librarianship, like techniques in any endeavor, can be performed rationally only in relation to the total process of which they are a part. Without reading insight, book selection in libraries becomes personal caprice, cataloging becomes stereotyped routine, reading aid becomes false pretension—and claims as an agency of enlightenment become questionable.

Understanding of reading starts with knowledge of the content of printed material. It takes shape with knowledge of readers. It grows with knowledge of how printed materials are used. And it will reach maturity when the effects of reading are known.

Understanding of reading is the dynamic quality lacking in many static libraries. Librarians must know content and readers thoroughly. They must think of motives for reading, favorable conditions for reading, handicaps of reading, and results of reading. They must put themselves in the position of the reader.

In gaining reading insight, librarians face many obstacles. The range of content to be known is exceeded only by the range of readers to be served. The scarcity of reliable information about how materials are used is exceeded only by the scarcity of reliable information about the effects of reading. But the difficulty in acquiring reading wisdom should no more deter the librarian than the complexity of organic disease stops the physician or the complexity of developing intellectual traits halts the teacher. It is the importance and complexity of these factors which make librarianship a profession.

The librarian should be the community's communication expert. His skills in cataloging, selection, bibliography, and interpreting are incidental to this, dependent upon it, and animated by it. He must see ever in his mind's eye the process by which the people in his constituency utilize the record of man's knowledge. Improvement in the profession of librarianship in the years ahead will proceed mainly from greater understanding of the communication of ideas.



SENSE OF COMMUNITY LIFE

The American public library seeks to be a community institution. This distinguishes it from other libraries, in this country and abroad. Rather than serving a special interest or a special purpose group, it serves the people living in a circumscribed geographic area. This characteristic places on the librarian the responsibility of achieving group insight, even as he must achieve individual insight.

Community is an element of group life, like family or church. It provides personal values, human associations, and common modes of action. Where people in a neighborhood share interests and problems, social organization is stable and social consciousness rife. The twentieth-century American community must be understood as a way of life which attempts to preserve group values in the face of disintegration resulting from population mobility, faster methods of transportation, and a wider range of personal contacts.

A library does not become a community institution by virtue of knowing and serving some individuals who happen to live in its vicinity. Its knowledge of locality is not complete if it has merely analyzed census figures and sent staff members to talk to a few prominent residents. It gains community identification when it enters into that life beyond the individual and family sphere that most people have. This is accomplished by sensitivity to the common aims of community residents, sympathy with opposing factions in the neighborhood, and consciousness of threats to local stability. It is aided by a community survey which penetrates beyond physical and statistical characteristics to the joint aspirations, the common memories, the many organizations, and the individual leaders which give the area identity. One test of the effectiveness of a community library is the extent to which not only the individual but the group life of the area can be grasped by watching the library in action.

Some libraries possess not only the ingredients but also the sense of purpose necessary for an agency of enlightenment, yet they are outside the stream of local life, correct, aloof, and deserted. Their programs are not vital, because they are not animated by the social stimulus that is so strong in all human life. Their programs are not sound because they get substantial materials only to literary and educated folk and not to the plain folk in the area. Their programs are

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not dynamic because they are founded upon precepts of library excellence rather than realities of local existence. They are libraries, but not community institutions.

Community characteristics do not prescribe library purposes. Library leadership is still needed to sharpen aims and concentrate energy. But community characteristics set limits outside of which objectives should not go; they aid in selecting the most feasible or most important objectives; and they suggest schemes to be employed in achieving objectives. In short, together a sense of purpose and a sense of community make possible that uniqueness which must vitalize every effective public library.

CONCLUSION

The objectives of the public library are many and various. But in essence they are two—to promote enlightened citizenship and to enrich personal life. They have to do with the twin pillars of the American way, the democratic process of group life, and the sanctity and dignity of the individual person.

The public library serves these objectives by the diffusion of information and ideas. By selecting and organizing materials, it makes an educational instrument out of a welter of records. By providing a staff able to interpret materials, it eliminates the gaps between the seeker and the sources of enlightenment. When animated by a sense of purpose, reading skill, and community identification, the public library constitutes an important and unique service agency for the citizen. Lacking these attributes, it is a passive badge of culture tolerated by an indifferent populace.

Is the public library a rising or a falling star—is its glory in the past or the future? The answer depends on the extent to which it achieves its purpose of mediating between seekers for information and ideas and the materials containing information and ideas. If it achieves this purpose it will be an indispensable institution in American life. If it fails it will be superseded by an agency or method which does achieve it.

The public library is potentially an essential unit in the American educational system. In isolated instances it has played a crucial role in the life of the community. In many instances it has in its day-to-

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day performance quietly aided the search for understanding. It comes closer than any other institution to being the capstone of our educational system.

An adequate, purposeful library should be brought into the life of every American. This is the aim of a national plan for public library service.

Taking Stock of the American Public Library

AT ITS best, the American public library is an institution of social power and importance. The introductory chapter has afforded a glimpse of the kind of library service to which a resident of the United States is entitled, and which in favored localities he has come to expect as a matter of course. The best libraries have demonstrated that, with adequate financing and alert, informed citizen support, service of high quality is entirely possible. In its good public libraries the United States has made an outstanding contribution to democracy, one which has attracted the attention of visitors from all over the world.

But the libraries which measure up to such standards are relatively few in number. Taken as a whole, library service in the United States falls far below the standards set by the best libraries—for three major reasons: First, one fourth of the American people live in places in which there are *no* public libraries. Second, there are far too many administrative units; the typical unit is too small in area and too weak in economic ability to provide effective library service. And third, the average level of library support is so low that service in a large proportion of American libraries can be no better than mediocre.

The purpose of this chapter is to appraise briefly and frankly present-day library service in the United States. The evaluation is largely quantitative and is made in terms of good library practice as defined by the American Library Association in its *Post-War Standards for Public Libraries*. Many of the data on which conclusions are based were obtained from some 400 public libraries in cities and counties of over 25,000 population which reported to the American Library Association in 1943. As a group, these measuring-stick li-

braries are considerably above the American average. Thus this report seems more than fair as a representation of public library service in general.

In essence, this appraisal enumerates seven plain and simple facts about the American public library system as a whole. These facts are widely known, but even librarians are prone to forget them because of the many outstanding, above-average libraries on which attention is often concentrated. The general situation must be clearly understood before a national plan for the improvement of library service can be formulated.

THIRTY-FIVE MILLION PEOPLE HAVE NO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The social significance and effectiveness of the public library must be measured by the extent to which it reaches the people. Today 27 per cent of the American people—over 35 million—still live in governmental units which do not maintain public libraries. Since 1925, this figure has been reduced by about 10 million, but several states report little or no reduction in the last two decades in the number of people without public libraries. A break-down by states shows that only Massachusetts and the District of Columbia are providing library service for 100 per cent of their populations, although several other states are very close to the 100 per cent mark. At the other extreme stands North Dakota with only 28 per cent of its people served by public libraries. In nine states, library service is provided for less than half the population.

Most of the people without libraries, 91 per cent, live in small villages or the open country. Over half the rural population is without public library service. Of the 3,050 counties in the United States, 661—many of them entirely rural—have no public library of any sort within their boundaries. Three fourths of these are in the South.¹

Among the Negroes of the thirteen Southern states the situation is even more serious. Library service is available to only 25.2 per cent of the total Negro population in these states, as compared with 56.4 per cent of their total population. Moreover, service is avail-

¹American Library Association, *Equal Chance Supplement* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1947). Revision (using 1945-1946 figures) of tables pp. 26-31 in 1943 ed.

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able to only 7.7 per cent of the Negroes living in rural areas. Even among urban Negroes only 59 per cent have library facilities.²

Reasons for this general situation may seem obvious: inadequate economic ability, lack of full educational opportunity, difficulty of supporting adequate library service in rural areas, and greatly dispersed population in many parts of the country. However, less tangible factors are perhaps just as potent. Persons who have been without library service and are little aware of its manifold facilities are not likely to demand it. This is as true of governing authorities as of the people at large. The question may therefore be raised whether state library leadership has not been to a certain extent at fault. Though there is a high statistical correlation between per capita income in the various states and per capita library expenditures,³ there are sufficient striking exceptions to suggest that in some states the will to good library service has been lacking. Is the low level of library development in part due to failure of library leaders to convince the people of the desirability of libraries?

Incomplete coverage is, therefore, the great immediate library problem. Total absence of library service for one fourth of the population is serious. If availability of information, of the records of social experience, is necessary in a democracy, the lack of libraries is also dangerous.

MOST LIBRARY UNITS ARE TOO SMALL

A second basic fact about the American public library system is that most of the administrative units are too small—both in population served and in income. Public library income, moreover, should meet two different standards: the standard for total income, and the standard for per capita income. Neither standard taken alone is adequate. The Committee on Postwar Planning of the American Library Association has fixed these two standards at a minimum of \$37,500 for total income for any library unit and a per capita income of \$1.50 for minimum service. Both these amounts are in-

² E. A. Gleason, *The Southern Negro and the Public Library* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941); Atlanta University. School of Library Service, *Libraries, Librarians, and the Negro* (Atlanta: 1944), p. 17.

³ L. R. Wilson, *The Geography of Reading* (Chicago: American Library Association and University of Chicago Press, 1938), pp. 356-63.

creases over previous recommendations of the Committee,⁴ but they represent only the easily demonstrable differences between prewar and postwar operating costs.

Of the 7,500 American public libraries, relatively few meet these standards. A recent compilation of public library statistics for the fiscal year 1945 by the United States Office of Education shows that, out of 355 cities with populations of 25,000 or more reporting, 189 had annual library incomes of \$37,500 or more. The total population of these 189 cities in 1940 was approximately 45 million. But only 19 of these cities, with a total population of 3 million, met the income standard of \$1.50 per capita.⁵ The remaining 7,000 or more public libraries, with comparatively few exceptions, were below the \$37,500 standard and, generally, much below the \$1.50 per capita standard. For all public libraries, the complete statistics compiled by the American Library Association for the fiscal year 1946 show average annual expenditures of \$0.72 per capita for the total population actually residing in library service areas.⁶

As of 1945, then, the general pattern of public library service areas may be roughly summarized as follows:

1. Approximately 50 million people are served by municipal and county libraries with annual incomes of \$37,500 or more. Only a small proportion of the libraries which make up this group, however, have annual incomes of \$1.50 or more per capita.
2. About 50 million people are served by public libraries with incomes of less than \$37,500. Some of the approximately 7,000 public libraries in this group are good libraries in terms of per capita income and records of use, but, in general, the income of the libraries in the group is too small for fully effective service.⁷
3. Approximately 35 million people live in areas without any public libraries.

⁴ Previous recommendations were \$25,000 for total income and \$1.00 per capita for minimum service. See American Library Association, Committee on Post-War Planning, *Post-War Standards for Public Libraries* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1943), pp. 55-56.

⁵ U. S. Office of Education, *Statistics of Public Library Systems in Cities of 25,000 or more Population, 1944-45* (Statistical Circulars). Complete statistics in *Bulletin 1947*, No. 12.

⁶ American Library Association, *Equal Chance Supplement*, *op. cit.*

⁷ These statistics must be taken as approximations only. They are based on the sources previously cited in footnotes 5 and 6.

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One of the great tasks of library planning, as these figures show, is the organization of a structure of public library units large enough and financially strong enough to provide effective service. The essential features of such a plan are presented in Chapter III.

This problem of small and effective library units has been solved only in part by the organization of county and regional libraries. A body of experience accumulated through the last quarter of a century demonstrates that a union of small units into a county or regional library provides the most economical and efficient method of supplying books and library service to all the people. But there are 3,050 counties in the United States, and in 1946 only 804 of these had the advantage of county or regional library service.⁸ Obviously, continued progress in the creation of larger units of library service is urgently needed.

MANY STATE LIBRARY AGENCIES ARE INADEQUATE

In varying degrees the states have recognized some responsibility for equalization and improvement of library service. All but one have established units of the state government which are charged with bettering the condition of libraries. However, many of these agencies are so poorly financed that both personnel and performance are weak, and the agencies are incapable of exerting a forceful influence throughout their states. The situation is improving; many states have recently increased appropriations for their library agencies and state grants-in-aid to libraries have grown largely in recent years. But the quality of achievement of state library agencies still ranges from very good to very poor. The majority continue to lack adequate support. Ineffective personnel is due to a large extent to poor financing, but in a few instances to appointments dictated by political considerations rather than by professional qualifications. In many instances, the record of the state governments in advancing library service has been disappointing.

LIBRARY SERVICE, IN GENERAL, IS MEDIOCRE

Public library service, it has been shown, is available to three fourths of the American people. But it is a safe generalization that

⁸ American Library Association. Public Library Office, "County and Regional Libraries," June, 1946. Mimeographed.

more than half the available service is inadequate and substandard in quality and quantity.

True, the over-all picture is impressive. Library collections totalled 131 million volumes in 1946, or 1.4 volumes per capita for the population served by libraries.⁹ And circulation for home use in the same year reached 356 million volumes, or 3.7 per capita for persons residing in library areas.¹⁰ But mass statistics are sometimes misleading, and closer qualitative analysis is necessary.

The quality of an institution's service is difficult to evaluate without an understanding of the goals which are sought. Yet many libraries have given little consideration to the basic objectives of service, and few have defined their goals in comprehensive statements. Many have failed to recognize that their objectives must be largely determined by the character of the community served. Institutions which fail to model themselves according to the needs of their constituencies frequently lack the vitality which makes them essential. Comparatively few libraries precede any definition of their objectives by careful community surveys or by studies of community reading interests.

Book collections, likewise, frequently are not pointed at the important needs of communities served. The library may perform its function as a recreational agency with a fair degree of success, but numerous surveys of the book collections in small libraries show their weakness in fields of vital social concern. The provision of technical and business books fitted to community activities is often lamentably inadequate. Far too little attempt is made to maintain up-to-date collections. Outmoded materials fill shelf space which is needed for important recent books and for replacement of worn-out or discarded materials. There is little experimentation with arrangement of materials designed to attract important population groups. Formal, standardized arrangement, with little regard for basic interests or reading abilities, frequently defeats the purpose of an excellent book collection.

The statistics show that a great majority of the public libraries fail to meet American Library Association standards, either in total

⁹ American Library Association, *Equal Chance Supplement, op. cit.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

book holdings or in annual additions to their collections. Of 459 libraries in cities of over 25,000 population reporting to the American Library Association for 1942, book collections in 388, or 84.5 per cent, fell below the minimum recommended by *Post-War Standards for Public Libraries*. In the number of new books purchased each year, 94 per cent of the libraries reporting failed to measure up to minimum standards.

Data concerning the provision of nonbook materials, such as pamphlets, documents, maps, and more especially audio-visual aids to learning, are for the most part lacking, but professional literature and observation testify to inadequate provision of materials in these fields. Libraries have struggled with mass handling of pamphlets and documents for many years, but few have yet learned to make effective use of them or to welcome them as the invaluable aids they are. Experimentation with audio-visual materials as supplements to books, or even as substitutes for them, is comparatively new among libraries, and relatively few are as yet equipped to serve in a field which will undoubtedly see phenomenal postwar growth.

Two generalizations are warranted by analysis of the available statistics of registered borrowers and home circulation of books in American public libraries. First, the average library reaches the children of its community much more fully than it reaches the adults. Among the libraries reporting to the American Library Association in 1943, the median per cent of children between the ages of 5 and 14 registered as library borrowers was approximately 50. The comparable figure for "adults" (persons 15 years of age and more) was only 23 per cent. Differences in median per capita circulation figures for children and adults are even more marked: approximately 9 volumes per capita for children and 3 volumes per capita for "adults."

Regrettably, statistics for registration and circulation of legal adults (persons 21 years of age and over) are not generally available. Since it has been well established that young people in the 15-20 age group are generally active library users, it is obvious that statistics of library use by actual adults must be materially lower than those cited above. In one large American city a careful check of registration of persons 21 years of age and over showed that only

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6 per cent were registered as library borrowers.¹¹ Clearly, library use by adults in many cities is disappointingly low.

A second generalization regarding library service is that the use of public libraries, measured by the number of registered borrowers and the number of books borrowed, fails in a large proportion of cases to meet American Library Association standards. These standards of use are expressed in rather wide ranges in order to account for correspondingly wide variations from city to city in educational levels and other population factors.¹² More than half of the 429 test libraries reported a circulation of less than 3 volumes per capita for persons 15 years of age and over and less than 10 volumes per capita for children—the low points in the circulation ranges suggested by the Association. On the other hand, only a very few libraries exceeded the high points in the Association ranges. In registration statistics, the showing was somewhat better, especially in the registration of children, but the median figures were also low. As always in the American library scene, a few outstanding public libraries can and do meet the highest standards of use, but the record of the great mass of libraries is generally mediocre.

The use of libraries for information and research purposes is difficult to measure either in quality or quantity. Regardless of many attempts to devise successful methods of evaluation, there are as yet few reliable data on which to base conclusions. However, in the light of observation and of such figures as are available, it may safely be said that information service is generally below satisfactory levels. Use of a great many libraries for fact-finding and research purposes is handicapped both by lack of necessary materials and by personnel with insufficient educational background.

¹¹ C. B. Joeckel and Leon Carnovsky, *A Metropolitan Library in Action: A Survey of the Chicago Public Library* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), p. 367.

¹² Standards for registration:

For adult borrowers: 20 to 40 per cent of the population 15 years of age and over.
For juvenile borrowers: 35 to 75 per cent of the population from 5 through 14 years of age.

Standards for circulation:

For adult books: 3 to 10 volumes per capita for the population 15 years of age and over. For children's books: 10 to 30 volumes per capita for the population from 5 through 14 years of age.

American Library Association. Committee on Post-War Planning, *Post-War Standards for Public Libraries* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1943), pp. 29-30.



PERSONNEL DEFICIENCIES ARE SERIOUS

Notwithstanding notable exceptions, then, the average American public library supplies only the barest essentials in the printed materials, and the majority of its potential constituency is untouched by its influence—at least, by direct contact. To what extent is this situation due to the personnel with which libraries are manned?

The facts reported in this section are based in part on recent surveys of library personnel in specific localities and in part on returns for the year 1942 from nearly 7,000 professional librarians in public libraries in the United States—approximately half of the professional librarians in all public libraries. The available data thus permit valid conclusions concerning the caliber of American librarianship today.

Although public librarians hold positions of great potential leadership, it is apparent that governing authorities of public libraries have felt much less responsibility for appointing personnel of high qualifications than has been the case in college and university libraries. General and professional education are not the only requirements for good librarianship, but in the sample studied in 1942, 38.6 per cent of the librarians holding professional positions were without college or university degrees. The question naturally arises whether the preparation of librarians to assume community leadership is on a par with that of other professions. Less than half (43.8 per cent) had the minimum educational requirements for professional positions—a college or university degree including at least one full year of training in a library school. Only 3 per cent of the librarians held advanced professional degrees, representing two or more years of library school education.

Further observations, though not substantiated by statistical evidence, show conclusively that many librarians qualified in academic requirements are poorly prepared in fields related to librarianship, such as the social sciences, education, psychology and, to be more specific, reading and learning processes, understanding of special groups (e.g., youth and labor), and public relations, and are thus ill equipped to assume positions of community leadership. Serious weakness in administration at top and middle levels is also apparent in many libraries. The demand for persons with special qualifica-

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tions in such subjects as science, technology, religion, business, and economics always exceeds the supply. It scarcely needs to be said that the high quality of service attained in many libraries attests to numerous outstanding exceptions to the above statements. These exceptions, however, further emphasize the general needs. The fact that the profession is aware of the situation and that efforts are being made to raise the quality of library personnel should not be overlooked. The present average, nevertheless, is not encouraging for the immediate postwar period.

One field of effort to raise the standards of librarianship calls for special mention. The profession has long been concerned that the state itself should assume as great responsibility for the quality of librarians as it has done for teachers. However, efforts to legalize certification of all public librarians have as yet succeeded in only seventeen of the states, with provisions for the certification of county librarians in six others.

Failure of administrators to differentiate clearly between professional and clerical duties has often greatly handicapped librarians of excellent quality and acceptable preparation in making maximum contributions. Job specifications are frequently lacking, and persons of high caliber are not attracted to a profession in which clerical routines, even to the casual observer, bulk so large. This generalization may be expressed in figures by noting that in nearly 70 per cent of the public libraries in cities of 25,000 or over reporting for the fiscal year 1945 to the United States Office of Education, the number of professional staff members exceeded the number of nonprofessionals. As might be expected, this tendency is least marked in the larger libraries in cities of 100,000 or over, in which the number of professionals is 52 per cent of the library staff, as compared with 63 per cent in cities of 25,000-50,000 population.¹⁸ Routine processes are obviously necessary to a high degree in operations involving mass handling of books, but libraries have been inexcusably slow in making such analyses and allocations of duties as would permit professional employees to devote maximum attention to advancement of major objectives.

¹⁸ These statistics include all "library staff" positions, except building staff, measured in "full-time equivalents." U. S. Office of Education, *op. cit.*

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Basic to this entire discussion of the inadequacies of personnel and personnel administration is the fact that low salary levels have thus far been well-nigh insurmountable obstacles to betterment. Failure to attract recruits of leadership caliber, insufficient staff to permit satisfactory differentiation of duties, paucity of genuine scholarship in the profession, may all be traced in large part to this financial aspect. Harold J. Laski, writing of English libraries, spoke with equal truth of conditions in the United States when he said: "The conditions of work have rarely been sufficiently attractive to win for the service men and women who think of it as a normal and natural alternative to medicine or engineering or architecture."¹⁴

During the war and postwar periods, salaries have increased materially in many libraries. Many large libraries have adopted higher salary schedules, and salaries in medium-sized and small libraries have been considerably increased. Generally speaking, however, public library salaries are still low, especially for senior staff members of administrative rank. In achieving the present status of librarianship as a profession, financial reward has not been a major incentive. If librarianship is to obtain its fair share of qualified recruits, however, library salaries must be made more attractive.

MANY LIBRARY BUILDINGS ARE OUTMODED AND OUTGROWN

The excellent quality of library service envisaged in Chapter I obviously calls for housing of superior type, for buildings designed through simplicity, harmony, accessibility, comfort, and friendliness to invite use by all members of a community. Recent examples of library architecture found, for instance, in Rochester, Toledo, Baltimore, and Fort Worth, have demonstrated that these objectives can be achieved and that modern trends in design are eminently suited to library purposes. The patron of the average public library, however, need not be called in as a witness to the prevailing situation—he has protested against poor lighting, long flights of steps, lack of checkrooms and parking space, dinginess, overcrowding, bad ventilation, and tomblike atmosphere. His complaints are not unjustified.

¹⁴ H. J. Laski, "The Library in the Post-War World," *Library Journal*, LXX (May 1, 1945), 383-85.

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Normal building programs have been delayed because of the war, with the result that library building is seriously in arrears. The existing acute library building shortage is fully documented by reports received in 1943 from more than 400 libraries serving cities or counties of over 25,000 population, three fifths of all public libraries of this size in the country. Nearly 60 per cent of the main library buildings for which data are available were erected before 1915. The best authorities estimate that even a well-planned library building will outgrow its original capacity in twenty years. Buildings erected thirty years ago are usually conventional and unimaginative in plan and design, and many were long ago outgrown. Most of them are now ill adapted to the enlarged and changing conception of the public library, and few have installed modern lighting and ventilation systems (a failure which is more of a deterrent to use than is commonly realized). New central library buildings are needed by one third of the 400 reporting libraries. Another third report the need of major additions. Only one third of the libraries believe their present central buildings are adequate.

A serious lag also exists in branch library building. Many new branches are needed; many old ones are now poorly situated because of population shifts and growth; much experimentation with branches in community centers is in order. Reports from libraries indicate that 592 new branch library buildings are needed in the immediate postwar period, and many existing buildings require additions or remodeling.

In short, reconversion of the physical plant of the public library to postwar needs is in itself a major problem. The present plant is barely 50 per cent adequate for existing library services. And for the hoped-for extension of library service to the 35 million people now entirely without public libraries, a great new building program must be undertaken.

LIBRARY INCOME IS INSUFFICIENT AND UNEQUALLY DISTRIBUTED

At the root of the various deficiencies in public library service described in this chapter, of course, is a correspondingly serious deficiency in public library revenues. Without adequate support good library service cannot be expected. As a basis for a national

library plan, it is important to note four points regarding the financial position of the public library system.

1. Total national public library income is now less than one third of the amount required to provide minimum service. The national average library income in 1946, the latest year for which total statistics are available, was \$0.52 per capita.¹⁵ This figure may be compared with the standards fixed by the Committee on Postwar Planning of the American Library Association: \$1.50 per capita for "minimum" service, \$2.25 per capita for "good" service, and \$3.00 per capita for "superior" service. Obviously, the average amounts now expended for public libraries must be trebled to attain even the standard for minimum service.

2. Very great inequalities among the states in per capita expenditures for public libraries are a dominant characteristic of American library development. In 1946 the extreme range in expenditures was from \$1.24 per capita in the District of Columbia, \$1.21 in Massachusetts, and \$1.17 in California to \$0.03 in Mississippi. In 28 states, expenditures were less than \$0.50 per capita. In 2 states and the District of Columbia expenditures exceeded \$1.00 per capita, but these states were balanced at the other extreme by 13 states in which expenditures were less than \$0.20 per capita.¹⁶ In the main, these inequalities follow the well-known pattern of differences in income between North and South, with library expenditures closely correlated with per capita income in the various states. But marked differences are also found between states in the same geographic regions. Some degree of national equalization of these great differences between the states in library support must be a major concern of library planning.

3. Serious inequalities in library expenditures are also found *within* each of the states. In some states, expenditure averages are materially increased by high expenditures in outstanding public libraries such as Cleveland and Boston. In other states are found groups of favored libraries with high incomes in well-to-do suburban cities. The work of these fortunate libraries is widely and favorably known and is often described in the library press. But, re-

¹⁵ American Library Association, *Equal Chance Supplement*, *op. cit.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

grettably, these above-average libraries are balanced in all the states by numbers of below-average libraries with very low per capita expenditures. In Illinois, for example, annual income from library taxes in 1945 ranged from a high of \$2.63 per capita to a low of \$0.15 per capita.¹⁷ And generally throughout the country, library service to the rural population is materially below, in quantity and quality, that provided for the cities. It is evident that the library plan must also provide for the equalization of these intrastate differences in library income.

4. As shown earlier in the chapter, very large proportions of the American public are served by libraries which are weak in total income or in income per capita. Many are weak in both. The extreme financial weakness of a large part of the American public library structure is a basic fact in any consideration of library planning.

SUMMARY

The foregoing appraisal of the American public library today warrants the conclusion that the United States has "the best library service in the world and almost the worst." The facts presented in this chapter regarding library service may be briefly summarized under three heads: availability, finance, and performance.

The availability of public library service to the American people is best visualized by the definition of three great population groups with respect to the distribution of library resources. First, about 50 million Americans are served by public libraries with annual incomes of \$37,500 or more. Many of these libraries are outstanding. Almost all are potentially good service agencies, although only a small number have incomes of \$1.50 per capita or more. A second great block of approximately 50 million people is served by about 7,000 public libraries with annual incomes of less than \$37,500. A third great block of 35 million people has no public libraries whatever. Out of this confused and unequal pattern of distribution of library resources, a satisfactory system of library service units must somehow be fashioned.

Financial support of American public libraries, in general, is

¹⁷ "Statistics of the Libraries of Illinois, 1945," *Illinois Libraries*, XXVII (September, 1945), 356-81.

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greatly below standard. Average annual income for all libraries in the nation is only \$0.52 per capita—about one third of the amount required for minimum service, as defined by the American Library Association's Committee on Postwar Planning. Only a small proportion of libraries have really adequate incomes, and the revenues available for one fourth of the people in library service areas are little more than nominal.

The performance of a large proportion of American public libraries, in terms of service rendered, books circulated, and information questions answered, shows that libraries are reaching only a small part of their potential users. Much of the professional personnel is deficient in basic educational qualifications and in advanced and specialized training. Buildings are not more than 50 per cent adequate for the books to be housed and the work to be done.

The standards of service used in this appraisal are not visionary, but are based on exceptions to the general norm now found in a few communities where the library is contributing to many phases of public life. To such libraries the citizen turns for assistance as naturally as to the public service departments of his city government. Measures by which the same high level of achievement may become nation-wide will be the concern of the following chapters. Remedies must be sought in a national plan of library organization, implemented by adequate financial support and by highly qualified personnel.

Patterns of Local Organization

THE success of any plan for American public library service depends upon a sound foundation structure of local library units. Important and necessary as is the place of the state in the extension of library service, local government will continue to play a major role in library development. Local libraries are the first line of service to the people. They must be strong.

The impetus for the establishment of public libraries has generally come from the people themselves, from citizen groups operating on the local level. Under the provisions of state law or municipal charter the local authority has established the library, when authorized either by popular vote or by its own direct action. It has provided for maintenance of the library by annual appropriations or by special tax levy, inadequate though support may have been. These factors of local interest and responsibility are part and parcel of the American pattern. The value of local initiative has been paramount, and regardless of the forms of future development this great asset must be retained.

LARGER UNITS OF LIBRARY SERVICE

The time is ripe in many states for a thorough overhauling of the structure of local library organization. The prevailing small-unit pattern, which has produced the huge total of 7,500 separate public libraries, must give way to a system of large and efficient administrative units, just as the small school district is rapidly giving way to the consolidated district.

NEED FOR LARGER LIBRARY UNITS.—Social changes have come rapidly to this generation, and authorities in all departments of government are faced with problems to which larger units of service provide the only solution. The metropolitan area presents some of the most

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complex and difficult problems. But, with the advent of automobiles, good roads, and shrinking distances, the jurisdictional and service aspects of government have been greatly affected in areas of all kinds. The relationship of the city to the adjacent territory is a factor in such functions as health, police, sanitation, recreation, and, not least of all, in equalization of library service. Boundary lines are artificial and meaningless in these fields of administration. Great variations in economic ability within metropolitan areas further complicate the problem of distribution of these basic public services. Likewise, the relationship of cities, towns, and villages to the surrounding rural areas presents even greater discrepancies in service facilities of all sorts. The rural resident in America has been the forgotten man in library service. As shown in the preceding chapter, more than half the rural population of the country is still without public libraries.

The need for larger units of service, which may disregard vestigial boundary lines and operate freely in natural rather than artificial areas, becomes increasingly evident. Future planning for libraries should look toward types of areas capable of covering the whole state and nation.

SIZE OF THE LIBRARY UNIT.—Obviously, no uniform specification can be made as to the minimum or maximum size of desirable library service areas which will apply invariably to all sections of the country. Population density, economic ability, transportation facilities, and natural trading areas¹ are all factors which will greatly influence each local situation.

Basic, however, is the principle that the area must be large enough to provide adequate library service. Considerable study has already been given to the question of what constitutes adequate library service. Standards for the minimum size of an effective public library may be stated in terms of annual income required or population served. In amounts appropriate to 1947 cost levels, the minimum

¹ For a discussion of the trade area as a logical library unit, see C. B. Joeckel, *Government of the American Public Library* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), pp. 317-20. For maps of trade areas, see International Magazine Company, Inc., *Trading Area System of Sales Control: a Marketing Atlas of the United States with Supporting Data* (New York: International Magazine Company, Inc., 1931); Hagstrom Company, Inc., *Hagstrom's Loose Leaf Atlas of the United States for Sales Managers, Advertising Directors, Business Executives*, edited by A. G. Hagstrom and J. B. Keeney (New York: Hagstrom Company, Inc., 1935).



annual income required for an effective library unit may be fixed at not less than \$37,500, with a population of not less than 25,000 in the library's service area. These amounts are necessary to secure the bare essentials of good service. A study made by Martin in 1944,² based on observation of approximately 60 public libraries serving populations ranging in size from 5,000 to 75,000, presents a convincing case for an even larger minimum size. Martin concludes, "Even modest essential elements of service were not attained with any regularity until the 50,000 population or \$40,000 income group" was reached.³ At 1947 levels, Martin's estimate of annual income required would necessarily be increased to approximately \$60,000.

Needless to say, the wealthy community with a smaller population can provide excellent service for itself at a higher per capita cost. In the over-all picture, however, such communities are relatively few in number, and their independence tends to perpetuate the present unequal distribution of service.

In determining the size and boundaries of the library area, objectives will be the achievement of complete coverage, unity, and simplicity in organization. Ideally, the larger unit should include all local libraries in a given area. How rapidly such unity can be realized will depend on a genuine desire for the correction of present inequalities of service and on the maintenance of a high standard of income and performance by the larger unit. Strong local libraries should be encouraged to join larger units but should be permitted, by legal provisions, to remain aloof from the unified organization until they are ready to join on a completely voluntary basis.

SERVICE ADVANTAGES OF THE LARGE UNIT.—Given an organization of library service based on the large unit, with an income meeting recommended standards, the service available to all people the country over will begin to approach the excellent service now available only to favored communities. The central library of the large unit will approximate in resources and types of service the good city library of the present time. A radiating system of branches, well supplied with materials for reading and study, staffed by skilled

² Lowell Martin, "The Optimum Size of the Public Library Unit," in C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Library Extension: Problems and Solutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), pp. 32-46.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

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librarians, will act as community centers throughout the area. Smaller communities, schools, and rural areas will be served by smaller branches and deposit stations and by bookmobiles or trailers. To any of these outlets the resources of the central collection will be available through frequent delivery or mail service and through the services of an expert staff. Requests for specific titles or for material on a given subject can be quickly filled, and the desired items delivered to an accessible point. Small, ineffective libraries already in existence will find their resources greatly augmented, while local interest and participation will be enlisted to a maximum degree.

The large-unit system, it should be emphasized, should not be permitted to level down existing good local library service. No restrictions should be placed on raising the level of local service beyond that provided by the central library. The local library may formally join the larger unit; or, if it desires, it may affiliate with the central library, or a group of cooperating libraries, and continue to operate under its own library board, thus maintaining a high degree of autonomy.

While the large-unit system should greatly reduce the number of separate library authorities, it should increase the number of *places* at which library service is now provided. Moreover, since good library service in sparsely populated rural areas is admittedly more costly than service in areas of concentrated population, the large-unit system cannot be expected, in general, to reduce total library operating costs. It should, however, result in more efficient and more equitable use of available funds.⁴

PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATION

Just as the size of the larger unit will be determined by local conditions, the pattern of organization will also vary from one section of the country to another, from one state to another, and even within the boundaries of a single state. Certain patterns have already emerged; others will doubtless develop in the light of further experience. The success of several types of large library units has already been clearly demonstrated in practice. It remains for states and local authorities to select wisely the type of organization best suited to their own particular needs. The American Library Association, in its

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 46; Joeckel, *Government of the American Public Library*, *op. cit.*, pp. 275-76.



Post-War Standards for Public Libraries, enumerates six patterns which are described in the following paragraphs. All but the fifth are in actual operation somewhere in the United States.

1. INDEPENDENT LIBRARIES IN CITIES OF OVER 25,000.—In the 412 American cities of 25,000 population and over, the prevailing pattern of library organization is the independent city library. Some 80 of these 412 cities are parts of county or other types of large library units, but the public libraries in the remaining cities serve only their own municipalities. This type of organization will assure a reasonable minimum of efficiency, so long as the city meets the accepted standards of 25,000 population and a minimum annual library income of \$1.50 per capita. Library service is provided to a compact area and is relatively convenient and simple. In the future, many of these municipal libraries may choose to retain their independence as library units. But from the point of view of a complete and efficient system of library service to all the people, it seems clear that many good city libraries are potential centers for service outside their own municipal boundaries.⁵ It is hoped that a large number of independent city libraries will, by contract or other arrangement, extend their services to the counties or regions for which they are the natural centers.

This kind of extension represents the quite normal expansion of the service area of an established institution to adjacent territory; it is closely comparable to the expansion of a retail business, a public utility, or a municipal school system. The major advantage of the plan is that the central library in the enlarged unit is already a going concern, able to provide comparable service throughout the area. It contains a reservoir of circulating books, a reference and bibliographic collection, and a staff of service and technical specialists; in short, it is "ready to serve." A major difficulty of the plan, which should be fully recognized, is that service to outlying districts may not be equal in quality to that of the central city. This danger may be avoided by close attention to the needs of the contracting district, especially by providing it with representation on the governing board or authority of the city library.

2. COUNTY LIBRARIES SERVING THE ENTIRE AREA OF LARGE COUNTIES

⁵Good examples are found in some of the city-township libraries in Indiana.



TIES.⁶—In this plan, a single, unified library serves the entire county without regard to subordinate governmental units.⁷ The library may be a department or agency of the county government, or service to the county may be provided by contract with the municipal library of the county seat. Under either method, the unified county library pattern has the great merit of simplicity, but it will provide adequate service only in states in which county populations and taxpaying ability are sufficient to meet minimum standards. Almost two thirds of the American counties have less than 25,000 people, the minimum standard of size approved by the American Library Association. A major advantage of this type is that the central library in the county seat provides a reservoir of books and also specialized personnel for the whole county. A major difficulty in organizing unified county libraries, on the other hand, is often encountered in persuading cities and towns to relinquish their independence and join the county library system. This type of organization is obviously especially adapted to counties in which the rural population is proportionately large.

3. COUNTY LIBRARIES SERVING PARTS OF LARGE COUNTIES.⁸—In this pattern of organization, the county library serves the part of the county outside of one or more independent city libraries, of which the county seat library is frequently one. In large counties of this type, the library serves a patchwork district, composed primarily of rural areas and small cities and towns. The more the wealthy cities retain their independence, the weaker the county service is likely to be. The result may be that the support and resources of the county library are often on a lower scale than those of the separate city libraries. One advantage of this type of organization is that in some cases it may permit concentration on the interests and needs of the predominantly rural population which the library serves. A major disadvantage, on the other hand, is that a headquarters separate from

⁶ E. H. Morgan, "The County Library," in C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Library Extension: Problems and Solutions*, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-74; M. W. Sandoe, *County Library Primer* (New York: H. W. Wilson Co., 1942); L. R. Wilson and E. A. Wight, *County Library Service in the South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935).

⁷ Important examples are found in Hamilton County, Ohio (including Cincinnati and Norwood, population 34,000), Multnomah County, Oregon (including Portland), and Kern County, California (including an area of over 8,000 square miles).

⁸ Numerous examples are found in California, New Jersey, and Ohio.



the county seat library must be specially created, with considerable duplication of book resources and technical apparatus and procedures. In smaller counties, this duplication is especially unfortunate.

4. REGIONAL OR MULTICOUNTY LIBRARIES.⁹—The organization of library units larger than a single county is an emerging pattern of rapidly growing importance. With a minimum population standard of 25,000 for the public library unit, nearly 2,000 American counties are too small in population and taxpaying ability to maintain efficient separate public libraries. There appears, therefore, to be an opportunity for the organization of several hundred regional libraries in which these small counties are combined into natural regional units, either by union with other small counties or with larger counties. The principal advantages of the regional pattern are that it (1) creates natural service areas strong enough to maintain effective libraries, and (2) eliminates duplication of resources and administrative overhead. The creation of regional libraries, however, encounters legal and other complications in the formation of a unit larger than the county, for which there is no existing counterpart in general government. However, recent regional library laws in several states seem to have met this difficulty successfully.¹⁰ Likewise, in other fields of government, such as public health,¹¹ for instance, special districts embracing several counties have been created in a number of states. The regional pattern may be expected to make rapid progress in states in which library development has been slow or in which there are considerable areas of sparse population or low taxpaying ability.

5. FEDERATED GROUPS OF LIBRARIES.¹²—A proposal for the organization of federated groups of public libraries is made here as an intermediate step in the organization of larger library units in many parts of the country in which considerable numbers of small libraries are already well established. A characteristic feature of the American

⁹ H. M. Harris, "The Regional Library," in C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Library Extension: Problems and Solutions*, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-97; Joeckel, *Government of the American Public Library*, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-340.

¹⁰ Consult the regional library laws of Virginia, South Carolina, Michigan, and other states.

¹¹ Haven Emerson, "National Health Based on Large Local Units of Service," in C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Library Extension: Problems and Solutions*, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-107.

¹² C. B. Joeckel, "Design for a Regional Library Service Unit," *Library Quarterly*, XII (July, 1942), 571-82.

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public library system, already noted in Chapter II, is the existence of several thousands of small, independent local libraries. These are separate and firmly rooted governmental entities, with vested property rights in collections and buildings and with a long tradition of local autonomy behind them. Many of these libraries are unlikely to join large units in which their separate identity is completely merged.

The term "federated group of libraries" is here used to mean a group of independent public libraries which jointly provide a carefully planned program of library service to a region. This plan proposes an informal type of regional library service based on active cooperation between a group of small, local libraries and the public library in the central city of the region. Essential elements in the scheme would include (1) service by local libraries to their own communities and adjacent territory, (2) centralized ordering and cataloging of books, (3) complete reciprocity in circulation privileges among all participating libraries, (4) reference and circulation service and regional leadership in the project from the library of the central city, and (5) liberal state grants-in-aid to compensate participating libraries in proportion to their services in the cooperative project. The integrated services of such an associated group of libraries would rather closely approximate those of a formally organized county or regional library, but the cooperating libraries would retain their complete institutional independence. A somewhat similar precedent is found in the organization of some thirty "central," or county, libraries in Denmark which cooperate actively with the town libraries in their respective regions.¹³ The obvious disadvantage of any such plan is that objectives must be achieved through voluntary cooperation rather than through more formal administrative direction. Experiments with some federated organizations of this type are greatly needed in a number of states.

6. SPECIAL STATE DISTRICTS.—In some states it may be advantageous for the state itself to undertake direct regional library service. This type of larger service unit conforms to the general trend toward state assumption or support of functions formerly performed by local

¹³C. B. Joeckel, "Realities of Regionalism," in L. R. Wilson, ed., *Library Trends* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), pp. 74-80.

PATTERNS OF LOCAL ORGANIZATION



government. In the library field, a variety of services of this kind are possible. Very small states, like Rhode Island and Delaware, afford excellent opportunities for the organization of the whole state as a single public library unit. In other states, the state library agency may establish supplementary regional services in cooperation with existing local libraries, as has been done in several New England states¹⁴ and suggested for New York. Or the state library agency may organize regional districts as its own branches for direct service to areas without public libraries. One advantage of this pattern of organization is that the state may be in a position to act quickly and effectively in developing regional service at times when local authorities are not prepared to organize this service on their own initiative. A possible disadvantage, on the other hand, is that the resources of existing strong local libraries may not be used in service units of this type.

In the following section of the chapter, more specific suggestions are made for the use of these different types of large-unit libraries in the major geographic regions of the country.

A NATIONAL PATTERN OF LARGE LIBRARY UNITS

At the present stage in public library development it would be inadvisable to attempt to show in detail how each of the large-unit patterns described above should be used in every state in the union. The extent of library coverage is increasing rapidly in some of the states, and new organization patterns will doubtless be devised. Moreover, it is recognized that each state should develop its own public library program. Yet the immediate postwar period is clearly the time for making careful plans and for decisive action.

For the purposes of this national plan for public libraries, it seems best to discuss the application of the various types of large library units in terms of the principal geographic regions of the country. The suggestions which follow are made with full realization of the difficulties involved in presenting a general scheme for the nation-wide organization of public library service. The regions differ greatly in governmental forms, in distribution of population, in economic abil-

¹⁴ Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts have established regional services of this sort.



ity, and in present library development. There are also marked differences from state to state. Some states included in a region may not conform to the prevailing regional pattern. Furthermore, there are sometimes considerable variations in library development and needs within individual states. Recognition of these regional and state characteristics, however, provides a reasonable basis for fitting the proposed types of large-unit organizations to the different sections of the country.

The accompanying tables supply the basic statistics for the discussion which follows. Table I presents by regions the essential facts about the number, population, and size of the political units and also the number of trade areas. Table II suggests how the various types of larger library units may be used in the major regions of the country. This tabulation attempts to show only those types of organizations which seem likely to be specially important in each region. In other words, it proposes *prevailing* patterns which seem peculiarly suited to the different parts of the country. Since numerous examples of independent municipal libraries (Type 1) are found in all regions, this type is not included in the table. These proposals are presented first in the table and later in somewhat more detailed form in the text. The plan is offered primarily as a stimulus to further study by state library authorities, planning agencies, and librarians generally.

NEW ENGLAND.—In New England, where the American public library movement had its beginnings, certain regional characteristics affect in a rather positive way the possible patterns of organization of large library units. In this region the functions of the county are relatively unimportant. The New England town, on the other hand, is the historical stronghold of local government. The town combines urban and rural areas; the government of its central community is not separated from the surrounding rural territory. Since public libraries have been established by practically all cities and towns in New England except in parts of Maine, the general pattern of library service may be described as virtually complete coverage through a system of small units. The historical background of these libraries, their interests, and the strong tradition of local independence in the towns and cities will doubtless continue to prevent the establishment



of any form of county or multicounty libraries. On the other hand, these same characteristics seem to point rather conclusively to the need for some form of federated library groups organized about natural regional centers (Type 5), or to a somewhat similar form of regional organization supplementing existing libraries sponsored directly by the state library agencies (Type 6). Perhaps these rather informal groups of libraries may gradually coalesce into more formally organized regional units, but experiments with cooperation among loosely federated groups of cooperating libraries seem clearly indicated as a preliminary step.

MIDDLE ATLANTIC STATES.—There is no least common denominator in the six states and the District of Columbia which comprise the Middle Atlantic region. From the great metropolitan district of greater New York to the mining communities of Pennsylvania and West Virginia or the sparsely populated areas of the Adirondack region, there are the widest variations in governmental and social structure, which defy simple classification. The high degree of urbanization is perhaps the most important fact for the purposes of this discussion. More than one third of the people in United States cities of 25,000 population and over live in this region. Likewise, well over half the people of the region itself live in cities of this size. The counties, although much below the national average in area, are relatively large in population, with nearly three fourths above the 25,000 level. Public library units in the region are very numerous; New York alone has more than 700 separate public libraries. In only one state, New Jersey, has the county library movement had marked success. In the region as a whole, over 6 million persons still live in areas without public libraries.

In terms of public library planning, the general situation in the Middle Atlantic states is obviously complicated and difficult. Possible applications of all the patterns of public library organization may readily be suggested. The independent city libraries constitute a powerful group. Although they have pressing problems in their own communities, they should be encouraged to join large-unit projects for which they are often the natural centers. There are many opportunities for the establishment of strong county libraries, in which the municipal libraries should be ready to cooperate actively through

TABLE I*
POPULATION, NUMBER OF POLITICAL UNITS AND
NUMBER OF TRADE AREAS IN THE UNITED STATES, BY REGIONS

Regions and States	STATES			COUNTIES			URBAN PLACES			TRADE AREAS	
	Population 1940	Land Area	Pop. Per Sq. Mi.	Number	Average Area	No. Under 25,000	Over 25,000	Under 25,000	Primary	Secondary	
NEW ENGLAND	8,437,290	63,206	133.5	61	943	17	61	170	52	256	
Connecticut	1,709,242	4,899	348.9	8	611	0	14	18	11	38	
Maine	847,226	31,040	27.3	16	1,940	5	3	23	7	37	
Massachusetts	4,316,721	7,907	545.9	13	564	2	32	90	14	133	
New Hampshire	491,524	9,024	54.5	10	902	2	3	15	10	19	
Rhode Island	713,346	1,058	674.2	0	211†	0	8	11	3	22	
Vermont	359,231	9,278	38.7	14	662	8	1	13	7	7	
MIDDLE ATLANTIC	32,192,301	136,512	235.8	225	586	61	90	724	99	799	
Delaware	266,505	1,978	134.7	3	659	0	1	7	1	9	
District of Columbia	663,091	1,961	10,870.3	0	...	0	1	0	1	23	
Maryland	1,821,244	9,887	184.2	23	403	11	3	21	6	23	
New Jersey	4,160,165	7,522	553.1	21	358	0	29	149	4	189	
New York	13,479,142	47,929	281.2	57	773	6	23	180	30	194	
Pennsylvania	9,900,180	45,045	219.8	66	672	12	28	327	44	318	
West Virginia	1,901,974	24,090	79.0	55	438	32	5	40	13	43	
SOUTHERN	37,013,087	843,812	43.9	1,305	634	848	86	838	193	726	
Alabama	2,832,961	51,078	55.5	67	762	17	6	53	13	48	
Arkansas	1,949,387	52,725	37.0	75	704	44	2	51	14	44	
Florida	1,897,414	54,262	35.0	67	810	50	8	62	12	47	
Georgia	3,123,723	58,518	53.4	159	368	131	6	72	20	64	
Kentucky	2,845,627	49,109	70.9	120	334	92	7	49	14	30	
Louisiana	2,363,880	45,177	52.3	63	706	35	5	49	6	51	
Mississippi	2,183,796	47,420	46.1	82	578	50	2	46	13	37	
North Carolina	3,571,623	49,142	72.7	100	491	47	9	67	19	61	
Oklahoma	2,336,434	69,283	33.7	77	900	46	4	70	17	63	
South Carolina	1,899,804	30,594	62.1	46	665	14	4	46	11	38	
Tennessee	2,915,841	41,961	69.5	95	442	59	5	52	11	54	
Texas	6,414,824	263,644	24.3	254	1,038	190	18	178	31	163	
Virginia	2,677,773	39,899	67.1	100	322	73	10	43	12	26	

Regions and States	STATES			COUNTRIES			URBAN PLACES			TRADE AREAS	
	Population 1940	Land Area	Pop. Per Sq. Mi.	Number	Average Area	No. Under 25,000	Over 25,000	Under 25,000	Primary	Secondary	
EAST NORTH CENTRAL	26,626,342	245,011	108.7	436	562	210	101	609	115	597	
Illinois	7,897,241	55,947	141.2	102	548	52	23	185	21	170	
Indiana	3,427,796	36,205	94.7	92	394	54	18	80	22	97	
Michigan	5,256,106	57,022	92.2	83	687	42	18	107	25	91	
Ohio	6,907,612	41,122	168.0	88	767	26	26	160	29	168	
Wisconsin	3,137,587	54,715	57.3	71	771	36	16	77	18	71	
WEST NORTH CENTRAL	13,516,990	510,621	26.5	615	822	510	29	356	94	322	
Iowa	2,538,268	55,986	45.3	99	566	74	11	78	19	80	
Kansas	1,801,028	82,113	21.9	105	782	88	4	60	13	49	
Minnesota	2,192,300	80,009	34.9	87	920	61	4	74	11	66	
Missouri	3,784,664	69,270	54.6	114	602	88	6	81	14	68	
Nebraska	1,315,834	76,653	17.2	93	824	87	2	34	12	35	
North Dakota	641,935	70,054	9.2	53	1,321	50	1	11	10	10	
South Dakota	642,961	76,536	8.4	64	1,107	62	1	18	10	14	
MOUNTAIN	4,150,003	857,836	4.8	276	3,085	241	11	148	52	102	
Arizona	499,261	113,580	4.4	14	611	8	2	14	6	14	
Colorado	1,123,296	103,967	10.8	62	1,650	53	3	27	9	22	
Idaho	524,873	82,808	6.3	44	1,882	39	1	25	7	14	
Montana	559,456	146,316	3.8	56	2,613	52	2	21	10	11	
Nevada	110,247	109,802	1.0	17	6,458	16	0	5	4	5	
New Mexico	531,818	121,511	4.4	31	3,920	26	1	21	7	4	
Utah	550,310	82,346	6.7	29	2,839	25	2	23	4	24	
Wyoming	250,742	97,506	2.6	23	4,063	22	0	12	5	8	
PACIFIC	9,733,262	320,130	30.4	132	2,407	70	34	207	36	196	
California	6,907,387	156,803	44.1	57	2,703	23	26	141	15	144	
Oregon	1,089,684	96,350	11.3	36	2,676	24	2	32	11	25	
Washington	1,736,191	66,977	25.9	39	1,717	23	6	34	10	27	
GRAND TOTAL	11,669,275	2,977,128	44.2	3,050	961	1,957	412	3,052	641	2,998	

* Data for states, counties, and urban places from U. S. Census, 1940. Data for trade areas from International Magazine Company, Inc., *Trading Area System*. Control; ^a *Marketing Areas of the United States with Supporting Data* (New York: International Magazine Company, Inc., 1930). Number of counties shown in total follows U. S. Census and William Anderson, *The Units of Government in the United States*, (New ed.; Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1945), pp. 19-29. These sources accept 3,030 as the number of counties operating as *units of government*. In addition, there are 47 county *areas* which do not function independently as counties. (For complete list, see Anderson, pp. 19-20). Column in table for "average area" of counties follows Anderson (p. 23) and includes both county "areas" and county "units" of government.

† Rhode Island has five county "areas," which do not function as "units" of government.

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TABLE II

PRINCIPAL TYPES OF LARGE-UNIT LIBRARIES
PROPOSED FOR THE UNITED STATES, BY REGIONS

Region*	County Libraries Serving Whole Counties	County Libraries Serving Parts of Counties	Regional Libraries	Federated Library Groups	Special State Districts
New England				X	X
Middle Atlantic	X	X	X	X	X
Southern	X		X		
East North Central	X	X	X	X	
West North Central	X		X	X	
Mountain	X		X		X
Pacific	X	X	X		

* Composition of regions as follows:

NEW ENGLAND: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont.

MIDDLE ATLANTIC: Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia.

SOUTHERN: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia.

EAST NORTH CENTRAL: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin.

WEST NORTH CENTRAL: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota.

MOUNTAIN: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming.

PACIFIC: California, Oregon, Washington.

contract arrangements. A number of areas, also, seem well adapted to the organization of regional libraries. Excellent opportunities for the organization of federated groups of cooperating libraries are found in the metropolitan districts as well as in other areas with numerous independent public libraries.

In summary, larger library units are greatly needed in the Middle Atlantic states in order to coordinate existing library resources and to extend library services to the considerable areas now without them. In achieving these objectives, it seems evident that several different patterns of large-unit organization should be used.

THE SOUTH.—The thirteen states making up the Southeastern and Southwestern regions constitute a generally homogeneous group, with several characteristics which materially affect the organization of library service. In the South, the county is the dominant governmental unit. There are no smaller local units except the cities, and these are relatively few in number. Counties are small in area, es-



pecially in the nine Southeastern states, and most of them are largely rural in population. Large-scale development of public libraries is still comparatively recent, and existing library units are not too strongly rooted. Per capita wealth is low. All of these factors make the South a region in which bold experimentation in larger units of library service may be ventured. They point conclusively to the organization of strong regional and county libraries. Many Southern counties are large enough to maintain libraries of their own, and the county pattern will continue to be important. Nevertheless, most of the strong counties have one or more weak neighbors, and regional combinations should be planned around the strong units. The South has a very real opportunity to establish a logically organized system of regional and county libraries, provided the states contribute generous grants-in-aid and vigorous leadership.

EAST NORTH CENTRAL STATES.—As a group, the five states which comprise this region rank high in population and economic resources. Of all the American regions, this has the largest number of cities of over 25,000 population. Counties are numerous and considerably below the national average in area; about half are less than 25,000 in population. County library service is almost complete in Ohio, but much less well established in other states of the region. In all the states except Ohio, the development of public libraries has followed the incorporated-area pattern. Numerous independent libraries have been established in all of the larger, and in many of the smaller, incorporated places. As a result, one characteristic pattern of library coverage shows library service in the incorporated places but not in the surrounding rural territory. Many of the existing libraries are weak, both in income and in book collections.

The conclusion warranted by the foregoing facts is that the East North Central region should move strongly in the direction of county and regional library units. About half of the counties are acceptable library units in population, but in northern Michigan and Wisconsin and in southern Illinois and Indiana, as well as in other areas, regional libraries are clearly needed. In parts of these states, in which existing libraries are numerous and well established, federated groups of cooperating libraries (Type 5) might be established as a preliminary step on the way toward the organization of more formal types

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of large units. Opportunities for organized cooperation are numerous.

WEST NORTH CENTRAL STATES.—The organization of local government in the eight North Central states lying west of the Mississippi is closely similar to that of the East North Central region, but the distribution of population is materially different. Large and medium-sized cities are much fewer in number and smaller in population. Counties, while larger in area, are considerably smaller in population; more than 80 per cent are below the 25,000 level. The average density of population per square mile is only one fourth that of the East North Central states. In number of county libraries, this region is weakest of all the United States regions. Library development has followed the incorporated-area pattern very closely. The number of independent libraries is surprisingly large, and many of these units are necessarily weak in resources and income.

In the future library development of this region, special emphasis should be placed on regional libraries. Many of the counties are much too small to support satisfactory library units. County libraries are appropriate units in the large counties, but, in many cases, these counties should be combined into regions with smaller adjoining counties. In the organization of all types of larger library units in this region, it is particularly important that all libraries in an area be included in the large unit. Municipal libraries ought not to be separated from county or regional units. In the more populous parts of these states, where existing libraries are numerous and fall into natural service areas, federated library groups (Type 5) may be organized. In general, the need for a successful working pattern of large library units is probably greater in this region than in any other in the nation.

THE MOUNTAIN STATES.—In the eight states comprising this region, sparsity of population is a dominant characteristic in relation to the organization of library and other public services. Population per square mile is 4.8, far below the national average of 44.2. The average area of the county in these states, moreover, is 3,085 square miles, in contrast with the national average of 961 square miles. In spite of their large area, 87 per cent of the counties fall below the 25,000 mark in population. These facts seem to provide sound reasons for the organization of county and regional libraries, with both types cen-



tered about the relatively few large cities in the region. In several of these states, population is so sparse that it is perhaps unwise to attempt to provide library service through local agencies. For this reason it may be suggested that public library service in some of the Mountain states should be provided by the state library, reinforced by a small number of state branches in strategic locations (Type 6). Even if local libraries are retained for the principal cities, the state library agency should be prepared to provide direct service to much of the remaining territory. The general organization patterns for the region include, therefore, county and regional libraries, with direct service through the state library and its branches as a possibility in at least parts of several of the states.

THE PACIFIC STATES.—The three Pacific coast states are characterized by very wide variations in geographic and population patterns, ranging from densely populated metropolitan districts to great areas of sparse population. Since counties are important governmental agencies and are generally large in area, the county library is obviously a favored pattern of large-unit organization. Despite their large areas, however, slightly more than half of the counties in the region are below 25,000 in population. Thus there are numerous opportunities for the establishment of regional libraries, often by joining counties with small populations to their larger neighbors. Moreover, the Pacific Coast states contain a considerable number of distinct minor regions and trading areas, such as the Inland Empire in Washington, which are natural locations for strong regional libraries. In general, the need for large library units based on the county or combinations of counties is clearly evident in the Pacific Coast region.

ESTIMATE OF NUMBER OF LIBRARY UNITS.—The foregoing proposals may be made more concrete by the tentative estimate in Table III of the number of public library units of all types required in each of the major geographic regions.

The figures shown in Table III are merely preliminary estimates. Only by a careful and detailed study of library areas in each state would it be possible to arrive at a more precise enumeration of the number of library units required in the United States. The estimates used, however, are based on careful consideration of reasonable possibilities in the reorganization of library service areas. The number

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TABLE III

NUMBER OF LIBRARY UNITS PROPOSED
FOR THE UNITED STATES, BY REGIONS

New England	55
Middle Atlantic	250
Southern	300
East North Central	210
West North Central	170
Mountain	85
Pacific	100
Total	<u>1,170</u>

proposed, it should be added, is intended to be large enough to cover the entire country efficiently, including all areas now without public libraries.

The total number of library units suggested, approximately 1,200, may be compared with such figures as the following:

Cities of 25,000 or over.....	412
Principal trading areas.....	641
Health units proposed by	
American Public Health Association.....	1,197
Counties	3,050

If the population of the 14 American cities of over 500,000 is omitted from the calculation, the average public library unit, according to this plan, would have a population of about 90,000 and an area of about 2,500 square miles. These figures are closely comparable, it is interesting to note, to the average area of California counties (approximately 2,700 square miles) and the average population of California counties (84,000) when the two California cities of over 500,000 population are omitted. The average library unit in the proposed scheme, therefore, is approximately the same in area and population as the average California county. In view of the marked success of the California county library system, the feasibility of the proposed plan for a greatly reduced number of library units seems obvious. The actual size of individual units would vary considerably from the averages suggested above. In the Mountain and Pacific states, the area of many units in square miles would greatly exceed the average, while in the more densely populated Middle Western, Eastern, and



Southern regions, the land areas would tend to be considerably smaller. The size of the units in population would vary according to the size of the larger cities included in each unit.

ESSENTIALS FOR REORGANIZATION

It is certain that better library resources and more expert service would be available to the citizens of the United States from a total of some 1,200 large and well-supported public library units than from the 7,500 existing libraries. But a sweeping territorial reorganization of library service of this sort cannot be accomplished without the fullest cooperation of librarians, state and local authorities, and citizen organizations of many kinds. The remapping of the country required by such a plan calls for a high level of library statesmanship. State and local leadership will be essential in formulating state-wide plans and determining desirable service areas. The state must interest itself actively in the reorganization project, both in making the necessary legal changes and in granting subsidies for the equalization of library service.

Many states, particularly those in which economic status is low and population widely scattered, will find it advisable to remake the library map almost entirely on the basis of topography, trade centers, and highways. Often the best opportunities for drastic revision of the library organization pattern will be found in the states or parts of states in which library service is now least well developed. On the other hand, reorganization may be most difficult in states and areas in which libraries are numerous and already well established.

Many existing libraries will find it necessary to reorient themselves toward a larger community. When libraries already maintain a high level of service, their local autonomy should perhaps be preserved and their voluntary cooperation in large-unit projects should be sought. Integration of services throughout a region must in no way lower the effectiveness of these superior libraries. It is conceivable, however, that a pooling of resources might bring definite advantages to such libraries, particularly to suburban libraries located near great metropolitan collections.

Legal provisions should be made for the voluntary union of political units in maintaining library service. Many states already permit

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joining of two or more counties and of other political subdivisions for this purpose. Provisions of this sort should be included in all library legislation and should be further liberalized to permit the crossing of state boundaries so that the library service area may reach its natural clientele.

Finally, plans for the creation of larger library units should provide for active local participation in library government and administration. Library boards should include members representing the major political units included in the library system, and citizens' advisory committees and "Friends of the Library" groups should be organized to lend support to library development.

SUMMARY

The plan for the organization of local library service outlined in this chapter is based on the concept that the success of library service throughout the nation depends primarily upon good local libraries, organized in efficient large units.

Following American Library Association standards, the plan envisages the establishment of library units with total annual incomes of not less than \$37,500 and not less than \$1.50 per capita. The soundness of this minimum standard of size has been amply demonstrated by careful and continued observation of public libraries in operation and by special studies of the optimum size of the library unit.

Because of marked governmental and social differences between states and regions, it is clearly inadvisable to prescribe a uniform pattern of local library organization which can be adopted generally in all parts of the country. In the national public library plan, therefore, several distinct types of large library units are proposed, and it is recognized that still others may be devised.

The independent city library in places of over 25,000 population is an efficient unit which will continue in substantially all the states. But in many instances, the separate city library, as the natural center for its area, should extend its service to its county or region.

The county library, serving all or part of a county, is naturally the primary large library unit. It will continue to be used in all regions except New England, where the town, rather than the county, is the

important governmental unit. Nearly two thirds of the American counties, however, are below 25,000 in population, and should be combined with still larger areas.

Regional libraries, comprising two or more counties, should develop greatly in importance in many states in which counties are small in population or low in taxpaying ability. Library regions should usually be organized about the principal trading centers.

Federated groups of cooperating libraries are a possible type of larger service unit which should be successful in regions like New England and the Middle West, in which there are numbers of well-established small public libraries. These cooperating groups will be informal in structure, but their services should be carefully coordinated about a natural center and should approximate those of a regional library.

State library services, in the form of state regional districts or branches of the state library agency, may be used in states with numerous small libraries or in very sparsely populated areas.

In a system of library service organized in large units of this kind, every American citizen would be within easy reach of a community branch library or a convenient bookmobile route. Within a distance of twenty-five miles, and usually much less, would be a central library with an ample stock of books and other materials and an expert staff at his command. And beyond this, for his out-of-the-ordinary needs, would be the state library agency or the great metropolitan public library acting as a major regional center.

About 1,200 public library units, according to tentative estimates, would be required for complete coverage in a library system using organization patterns of the various kinds described. As this goal is approached, good library service will become generally available to all people and all regions in the United States.

The Role of the State in Public Library Development

THE local public library, as shown in the preceding chapter, is the first line of library service. It is the responsibility of the state to provide the second line of service.

In the *United States* of America, the individual state occupies a key position. It determines its own organization and functions, and it creates the various units of local government and defines their powers. The state, therefore, has a basic responsibility for the establishment and development of public libraries, as well as other agencies of government. In the making of an effective public library *system*, the state plays a decisive role.

But since there are forty-eight states, each with sovereign powers in its own sphere of government, variations in the organization of library functions from state to state are inevitable and desirable. No single plan will serve all states equally well. This statement of a national library plan, therefore, does not attempt to specify detailed procedures uniformly applicable to all the states. It recognizes that such details must be adapted to the varying patterns of state government. Nevertheless, there are certain basic responsibilities for library development common to all the states and certain library functions which all states should perform. These are described in general terms in the sections of the chapter which follow.

In prewar years a strong trend toward the strengthening of the library functions of the states was already discernible. This trend will almost certainly be continued and accentuated in the postwar period. As the new era begins, the states are in a strong financial position. Funded debts have been greatly reduced, and prospects for a continuing high level of revenue are favorable. The states can, if they will, greatly influence the postwar development of public libraries.



A SOUND LEGAL BASIS FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The first duty of the state in relation to libraries is to provide a sound legal foundation authorizing the establishment and maintenance of public libraries. This may be accomplished by appropriate constitutional and legislative provisions.

The state should formally and specifically recognize, first of all, its responsibility for complete, state-wide library service. As rapidly as possible, the states should shift from permissive to mandatory legislation for the establishment and maintenance of public libraries. The states have long recognized their obligation to provide a minimum formal education for all inhabitants through mandatory laws. But they have failed to recognize that this was but a preparation for adult education. They should now be prepared to recognize an equal obligation to make books, the tools of education for adults as well as the young, universally available and accessible. The framework of library legislation adopted by the state may permit reasonable variations in the organization and administration of local public libraries, but it should insure minimum support, administrative units of sufficient size, and qualified personnel for all libraries.

In other words, the principle that the library is an educational concern of the state should be established beyond question.¹ In some states, it may be advantageous to incorporate this provision in the state constitution. Missouri's new constitution of 1945 provides: "It is hereby declared to be the policy of the state to promote the establishment and development of free public libraries and to accept the obligation of their support by the state and its subdivisions and municipalities . . ."² In Washington, the preamble to the state library law contains a similar statement of policy: "It is hereby declared to be the policy of the state, as part of its provision for public education, to promote the establishment and development of public library service through its various subdivisions."³ Similar specifications are contained in the preambles of the Virginia and South Carolina library laws.⁴ To be effective, of course, such general pronouncements

¹ C. B. Joeckel, *Government of the American Public Library* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), p. 354.

² Missouri Constitution, ratified February 27, 1945, Art. IX, Sec. 10.

³ Remington's *Revised Statutes of Washington*, 1940, Title 53, Chapter 2, Sec. 8226-1.

⁴ *Virginia Code*, 1936, Sec. 347 (11); *South Carolina Acts*, 1934, p. 1480, No. 873, Sec. 1.

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must be implemented by comprehensive programs of action for library development.

THE STATE LIBRARY AGENCY⁵

Each state should implement its library program through liberal support of an effective, dynamic state library agency, with a staff fully qualified to assume responsibility and leadership for development and coordination of adequate library service. Achievements of outstanding state library agencies have demonstrated the indispensable part they can play in furthering the state's program for libraries. Their functions include a wide range of responsibilities, which should be planned as an integrated whole, not as unrelated parts.

ORGANIZATION.—The precise form of organization of the state library agency will be determined by the general pattern of government in each state or, perhaps, by historical factors. An effective type of organization is the centralized state library charged, as one of its functions, with the development of library service throughout the state. This plan may combine the general state library, law library, library extension agency, legislative reference bureau, state historical library, and other related services into a single integrated service agency. State school library supervisors may be included in the state library or in the state department of education. Such consolidation of library functions is to be encouraged but should be preceded by careful study and wise planning. The resulting closely-knit agency may be organized as an independent unit under a state library board, or it may be made part of the state department of education. In either type of organization, the essential character of its functions should be recognized.

Fundamental to reorganization and strengthening of the state library agency are freedom from partisan politics and political interference of all kinds, strong professional leadership supported by legal requirements, and appropriations adequate for state-wide extension

⁵For a more complete statement on functions and organization of the state agency, see American Library Association. Library Extension Board, "The State Library Agency," Edition 5 (Chicago: American Library Association, 1945; Mimeographed); Arnold Miles and Lowell Martin, *Public Administration and the Library* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), pp. 11-59.

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and improvement of library service. These specifications are essential.

FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE LIBRARY AGENCY IN RELATION TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES.—The state's program of assistance to libraries should be broad in scope and vigorously administered. From the standpoint of future library development, perhaps the most important duty is that of *planning* for state-wide coverage through efficient areas of service and coordination of existing resources. The state library plan is usually developed in cooperation with the general state planning agency and the state library association. Such a plan is, of course, basic to the logical extension of library service and should precede any future legislation. As a foundation for its planning activities, the library agency should make studies and surveys of library service throughout the state. Implementing the state plan, the library agency will advise the state legislature as to needed legislation.

After the state plan has been clearly formulated, the state library agency should *promote* the development of libraries in accordance with the plan. This will be accomplished by an active publicity campaign and by intensive work of field agents in areas without library service. But the establishment of new libraries should not be prematurely forced; service areas of newly organized libraries should be of proper size and income reasonably adequate.

Equally important are the supervisory functions of the state library agency. Extension of library service to all parts of the state is only the first step in the program; the library agency must also be actively concerned with improving the quality of existing library service. It should set and enforce *minimum standards* of library performance and local support. The state agency should also have full authority to require the filing of annual reports, statistics, and other information regarding all public libraries. Through regular visits of its field agents, it should be in close touch with the quality of work done by individual libraries and with library needs generally. Statistics of library service collected by the states should be made available to other state offices, the national library agency, the American Library Association, and the general public.

A closely related responsibility of the state library agency is the maintenance of a *consultant and advisory service* for librarians, boards of library trustees, and citizen groups interested in library

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development. To perform this function successfully, the agency must have the full confidence and support of librarians and library authorities throughout the state. By means of visits, personal conferences, and correspondence, and through institutes, workshops, and publications, the library agency will make its stimulating influence and leadership felt at the grass roots.

The state library agency should be charged with the *administration of the state system of grants-in-aid to libraries*. Similarly, it is the appropriate authority for the *administration of federal grants-in-aid to libraries* in the state and should be so designated by statute. These important functions must be exercised with skill and with sound judgment since the state agency may often determine, in part at least, the methods of distributing library grants.

Finally, the state library agency should organize a systematic and continuous flow of *supplementary services* from its collections and its expert personnel to the public libraries of the state. In this respect the state library agency is to the whole group of public libraries what the central library in a large municipal library is to its branches. Only as these supplementary services are skillfully organized and fully integrated can library service throughout the state become a real system, as contrasted with scattered, individual services offered by a large number of small, and often isolated, libraries.

The core of this supplementary service will consist of a large-scale, rapidly-operating interlibrary loan service designed to supply the needs of individual readers anywhere in the state for books and other materials. In some states, like California and Ohio, it may be desirable to tie in with the interlibrary loan system the book resources of the entire state by means of a union catalog of the holdings of the public, and perhaps other, libraries in the state. Whether or not a state union catalog is needed, the unusual resources of all libraries should be made generally available to readers everywhere. Traveling libraries and circuit collections pointed at the special needs of different types of communities will also be useful in many states in supplementing the meager book resources of local libraries.

In its supplementary services to libraries, the state library agency should emphasize particularly nonbook materials, such as films and audio-visual materials, pictures, prints, and the like. It should pre-



pare lists of places where such materials can be obtained and should assist local librarians in the selection and use of these new types of materials.

But the state library agency must also supply services, as well as books and materials. It will maintain a centralized information and bibliographic service to which local libraries should be encouraged to send their difficult reference questions and their bibliographic problems. The state agency may also provide centralized cataloging for libraries desiring this service.

In supplying these supplementary services, the state library agency will normally work through established public libraries. In parts of the state without public libraries, the state agency must provide *direct library service* to schools, to clubs, and to individuals. In these areas, the state agency, to a limited extent, takes the place of the local public library.

STATE AID FOR LIBRARIES⁶

In addition to providing a basic legal foundation and a wide range of services for libraries, the state has three other important responsibilities for public library development: (1) state grants-in-aid, (2) improvement of personnel by certification and other means, and (3) organization of a system of larger library units. These are not entirely separate and distinct functions. On the contrary, they should be closely interrelated, since all three are essential in an effective organization of libraries. If the state is to subsidize libraries, it ought to be assured that their personnel is well qualified and that service units are large enough to be efficient.

The adoption of a sound and continuing program of state aid to libraries will probably be the most decisive action most states can undertake on behalf of public libraries—both in extending library coverage and also in raising the minimum level of library support. In recent years, the states which have been most successful in filling the gaps in library service have been those which have combined substantial programs of state aid with strong emphasis on larger units of library service. In several states, unusually rapid progress has

⁶ J. W. Merrill, "State Aid to Public Libraries," in C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Library Extension: Problems and Solutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), pp. 195-211.

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been made through effective use of grants-in-aid to county libraries.

REASONS FOR STATE AID.—The state in general recognizes its responsibility for all its citizens. It has assumed increasing obligations through financial aid for schools, roads, agricultural extension, social security, workmen's compensation, and other functions of state concern. These grants are based on a recognition of the need for greater equality and uniformity in welfare provisions, and for raising social and educational standards. The arguments for state responsibility in these generally accepted fields apply with equal logic to state aid for libraries. The library is potentially a great force in public education; its possibilities have scarcely touched the popular imagination because of the inadequate support which has become almost a traditional handicap. Fundamental to such aid from the state is the fact of great economic disparity between different sections of the state and between urban and rural areas. Moreover, the increasing trend of revenues away from local to state treasuries intensifies the need for state assistance.

POLICIES IN STATE AID.—In formulating its plan for library subsidies, the state must make several important policy decisions. First of all, the total amount to be allocated for library aid must be determined. No standard rule as to the amount of state library aid can be cited, but it should be large enough to have a positive effect in advancing the state's library program. The plight of local government today in meeting rapidly increasing burdens on local tax resources has been summarized as follows: "The obligations and responsibilities of local governments have been enormously increased at the same time that their resources have been more and more circumscribed."⁷ In view of this general situation, it seems reasonable to propose that not less than 25 per cent of total public library revenues be obtained from state grants-in-aid. This amount is in line with grants currently made by the states to local governments generally. In the United States in 1942, local governments of all types received 23.7 per cent of their revenues from the states; counties, 33.0 per

⁷ T. H. Reed, "Federal State Local Fiscal Relations, a Report Prepared . . . for the Committee on Local Government Activities and Revenues" (Chicago: Municipal Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada, 1313 East Sixtieth Street, 1942); Mimeo graphed, p. 3.

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cent; school districts, 33.1 per cent; and cities, 15.1 per cent.⁸

Second, the state must determine whether state aid to libraries may be used for general expenditures or limited to a particular purpose, such as payments for books. The unrestricted grant which may be used for general current expenditures seems clearly preferable.

Third, the state-aid program should provide that local governments continue to make a reasonable effort to support library service before state grants are allotted. Matching of state grants should not be required, but the state may reasonably stipulate that communities receiving state aid shall not reduce their local appropriations after receiving state funds.⁹ Or the state may require that local units levy a tax of at least a minimum rate before state grants are made available.

Fourth, state grants must be made and administered in such a way that they do not perpetuate ineffective libraries in their inadequacy or strengthen unqualified personnel in their present positions. Local libraries which receive state grants must therefore be required to meet reasonable standards of performance, determined and enforced by the state library agency.

Finally, as stated above, administration of state grants-in-aid should be placed in the hands of the state library agency. This procedure will insure the necessary professional guidance and stimulation aimed at raising service levels, and should avoid an excess of state control and interference.

FORMULA FOR STATE AID.—Each state must determine its own formula for the distribution of state aid to libraries in the light of its own needs and problems. In some states, authority to allocate the state grants may be vested in the state library agency; in others, the plan of allocation may be embodied in the state-aid law. But whether allocation is determined by law or by administrative action, the formula used should be as simple as possible and equitable in application.

Population is the simplest and most easily administered measure for the distribution of state aid to libraries. Since the need for library

⁸ U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Governmental Finances in the United States, 1942* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1945), pp. 14, 27.

⁹ For example, see *Michigan Statutes, Annotated*, v. 11, 1941, *Supplement*, Sec. 15.1791 (8), par. a.

service is measured largely by the number of people to be served, there is justification for the use of population as a partial basis for a state-aid formula. Moreover, the shrinkage of local revenues in many cities, in contrast with marked increases of state revenues, is a further justification of this basis for allocation. The same argument may be made on behalf of grants to large metropolitan cities, which serve as natural centers for information and research for large regions. However, it is readily apparent that a population formula aids the wealthy city or county in the same proportion as it does the underprivileged community. Therefore, a population formula should not be used alone, but should be modified by other measures of economic ability or need.¹⁰

Equalization of library service should be a major objective of the state-aid formula. Cities and counties of low taxpaying ability need library service fully as much as their more fortunate neighbors, and it is the task of the state to provide a minimum level of support for all public libraries. In many states, the most convenient measure of taxpaying ability is the assessed valuation of property per capita. The equalization formula will then provide larger per capita grants-in-aid to communities with low per capita assessed valuations, and vice versa. A common method of applying the equalization formula is to require each local unit to levy a tax of at least a minimum rate; the state then adds to the amount produced by this tax in each unit a sum sufficient to reach a predetermined minimum per capita revenue for the whole state. This method requires an equal effort on the part of each community and makes the state responsible for maintaining a minimum level of library support. Whatever the kind of formula adopted, the state should make a substantial proportion of its library subsidy available to the libraries which need assistance most.

Grants to *county and other large-unit libraries* may be emphasized in states in which the rapid extension of library service to new areas is a major objective. In such situations, the state may decide to throw the weight of its influence into the development of a strong system of large-unit libraries. This may be accomplished by devoting the entire state subsidy to grants of this type or by allocating a substantial

¹⁰ C. H. Chatters, "State and Federal Aid to Local Governments," in C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Library Extension: Problems and Solutions*, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

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part of a general subsidy to large-unit grants.¹¹ In other instances, the state may itself operate *regional services* designed to supplement and coordinate the facilities of existing libraries through bookmobiles and lending libraries.¹² Or the state may establish *demonstration libraries* supported largely by state funds in responsive areas.¹³ While such demonstrations are not strictly grants-in-aid, they accomplish much the same purpose. All types of large-unit grants will effectively stimulate the organization of the specific types of library units in which the state is primarily interested.

A *composite formula*, including, as major factors, equalization, population, and large service units, may be used in states with comprehensive programs of state aid to libraries. The relative weights assigned to the different elements may be varied in accordance with the stage of development reached at any particular period in the library history of the state.

The case for state grants to libraries is convincing on the grounds both of need and results. In general, grants to libraries should be greatly increased and should become a recognized obligation of all state governments.

STATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR LARGE SERVICE UNITS

The state's responsibility for creating an efficient pattern of local units of library service has already been stressed at several points in preceding pages, and the subject of larger service units was discussed in detail in the preceding chapter. The subject of library areas is introduced here for the purpose of emphasizing the point that the state, through its library agency, should plan the development of a system of local libraries strong enough to provide service of high quality. The state may influence the development of a library system of this kind in several ways—through state grants-in-aid to county and regional libraries, through careful planning and surveys, and through the close contacts of its field representatives with local libraries.

Moreover, the system of book and bibliographic services described above operates most successfully in connection with a strong group

¹¹ Various types of large-unit grants are found in North Carolina, Arkansas, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, and Michigan.

¹² Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts have services of this kind.

¹³ Louisiana and Illinois are examples.

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of large-unit libraries. The efficient local library is able to fill many requests without referring them to the state library agency; the latter, in turn, can deal more effectively with unusual and more difficult inquiries.

DIRECT STATE LIBRARY SERVICES

Already a few states are providing direct library service on the local level as one of the functions of the state library agency. It may be predicted that this type of service will be considerably expanded in the postwar era. With its own funds, the state agency may carry on demonstrations and experiments in service to wider areas than the state pattern has yet displayed. In some instances, this may take the form of regional branches established to aid local libraries; in others, the state branches may provide service to areas entirely without local libraries. In time, perhaps, very small states, or states with widely scattered populations, may concentrate all public library service in a single unified organization.¹⁴ Most states, however, will continue to direct their efforts toward the development of strong local library units.

PERSONNEL STANDARDS

The state is also responsible in large part for the quality of the personnel in its public libraries. The first and basic step is *certification*. A comprehensive statute should be passed requiring the certification of the professional librarians in public libraries of all types. The simplest and most effective type of certification law is one which creates a certification board or agency and authorizes this agency to determine the grades and types of certificates and to administer the certification system. This method has the advantage of flexibility. It permits changes in types of certificates as personnel qualifications and standards improve. Certification laws and regulations should facilitate the easy transfer of qualified librarians from state to state.

If public library staffs are governed by state civil service regulations, the state library agency should participate actively in establishing civil service policies affecting library positions. A special effort

¹⁴ This has been suggested for Rhode Island, Delaware, and New Mexico. See C. B. Joeckel, *Government of the American Public Library*, *op. cit.*, pp. 296-297.

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should be made to insure examinations which are open to qualified candidates throughout the country generally.

Certification should be only the initial step in the state's program for its library personnel. The state library agency should assist actively in the recruitment of personnel for the public libraries of the state. It should foster good personnel administration and should concern itself continuously with the improvement of the status and qualifications of library personnel. It should work actively for higher salary levels, improvements in working conditions, and the inclusion of librarians in pension systems. It should use its influence in securing the adoption throughout the state of sound practices in personnel administration: appointment for merit only, probationary appointments, tenure, classification and pay plans, and service ratings. Another aim should be the encouragement of in-service training through institutes and conferences aimed at reaching the rank and file of librarians throughout the state. The library agency should also stimulate the use of appropriate professional literature by public librarians by providing a generous supply of books and periodicals for loan to staff members of the smaller libraries.

STATE LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS

Library development in a state will not progress far without active and strong support from the state professional organization. The librarians of the state, organized primarily for the improvement and extension of libraries, will join with the state agency in study and planning, in formulation of effective policies and procedures, in campaigning for legislation and support, and in implementation of the state plan at every step in its development. Through the state organization, the state agency can often effectively reach individual librarians as well as the citizens of the state.

State library trustee associations likewise can be of great importance in developing and furthering state plans for libraries. Associations of this kind have been organized in only fourteen of the forty-eight states, and some of the existing organizations are relatively inactive. A strong state trustees' organization is a direct channel to citizen interest and support. It can bring much influential opinion and the background of valuable experience to bear on legislative and

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planning programs. The interest of the trustee should be state wide.

The state associations will also, independently of the state agency perhaps, undertake programs of investigation and study, recruiting, improvement of local library services, solution of personnel problems, and a broad program of public relations activities. Where state agencies are as yet weak and ineffective, it is to the state library associations that local progress, legislative improvement, and cooperative efforts are largely due. Rapid progress toward realization of a state-wide library program is to a large extent dependent on the existence of strong organizations working in close sympathy and harmony with a vital, liberally supported state agency.

SUMMARY

The great library task of the state is to sponsor the development of an efficient and integrated *system* of public libraries available to all its people. Local libraries will normally provide direct service, but the state must supply important supplementary services and must enforce general standards of satisfactory performance. The major responsibilities of the state in furthering the library plan may be briefly summarized as follows:

1. The state should insure a strong legal foundation for its public libraries by constitutional or legislative provisions which recognize public library service as a state concern and make the establishment of public libraries mandatory throughout the state.

2. For the direction of its library program, the state should establish a strong library agency in which the library functions of the state are unified in a single organization. To perform the important duties assigned to it, this agency must be staffed by expert personnel, technically competent and capable of vigorous leadership. Budgets of all state agencies should be substantially increased, especially in states in which agencies are now weak. The state agency will plan and promote the extension and more efficient organization of library service; it will conduct a consultant and advisory service for local librarians and trustees; and it will supply supplementary book and bibliographic services to libraries and also to areas without public libraries.

3. Through a system of grants-in-aid to public libraries the state should insure at least a minimum level of library support throughout

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its whole territory. Formulas for state aid should be adapted to the specific needs of each state but will normally be based on such factors as population, financial need, and larger service units.

4. The state should strive continuously to improve the quality of its public library personnel through certification laws and regulations and through in-service training by means of institutes and conferences.

5. The state should also use its influence actively in the organization of a state-wide pattern of large service units.

6. In some states, the library agency may itself provide direct library service to selected areas through demonstrations of various types of large units or through supplementary services to regional groups of libraries.

The general objectives of the state library program are to systematize public library service and to put good libraries within reach of all the people. The achievement of these goals will require active cooperation between state and local authorities. In most states, it will require also a greatly strengthened state library agency which can furnish leadership of the highest quality.

National Responsibilities for Public Library Service¹

THE postwar role of the federal government in a nation-wide program of public library service will be one of increasing importance. But it should be clearly recognized as an *auxiliary* role. In the American system of federal government, public library service is a responsibility of the states and local governments and has been duly authorized by all the states. Control, administration, and basic support are, in general, functions of local government, although, as noted in Chapter IV, the states are accepting increasing responsibility for support and in some cases for direct service.

But education is also a concern of the federal government. Active federal interest has been shown in various adult education projects; moreover, the government's provision of many important kinds of library service already indicates an awareness of its obligation in this related field. Such evidence of federal interest in libraries, though they are creations of state and local government, is entirely legitimate and desirable. No government which draws its authority from the will of the governed can be indifferent to the availability of informational resources to those who are the ultimate reservoir of power. Books and other sources of recorded information must be available to all the people. The federal government, if it accepts this premise, must therefore be concerned with the general improvement of the quality of public library service.

In determining its policy of assistance in the development of a national library program the federal government should be guided by several underlying principles of basic importance:

1. National library agencies should not attempt, directly or indi-

¹C. B. Joeckel, *Library Service*; prepared for The Advisory Committee on Education (Staff Study No. 11), (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1938), pp. 33-53, 64-90.

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rectly, to control the organization or administration of local library service.

2. The federal government should recognize its peculiar responsibility for maintaining throughout the country as a whole a high minimum level of library service. Only with the assistance of the national government can this end be achieved.

3. The library and bibliographic services of the federal government should be expanded and extended so as to attain their maximum usefulness to the libraries of the nation. These services should be offered as a planned program of assistance to libraries—not merely as by-products of the normal functions of federal libraries.

4. Research in methods and techniques of library service and demonstrations of varied patterns of library organization in action are important and appropriate federal functions.

5. Full and systematic cooperation between federal and other libraries in library functions and services should be a major end in library planning. Federal libraries may be expected to assume a position of leadership in such cooperative projects.

FEDERAL SERVICES TO LIBRARIES

The library services provided by federal agencies are already numerous and extensive. The specific items here singled out for mention should be considered only as examples and not as a complete catalog of present or future federal services to libraries. Moreover, the services listed are obviously not limited in application to public libraries but are of general interest to libraries of various types.

“Good library management,” the Librarian of Congress has recently said, “can perform statesmanlike services for the people of this Nation.”² The task of coordinating the many functions now performed by federal agencies on behalf of libraries is indeed one which requires skillful management. These functions are not centralized in a single organization unit but are administered by various libraries and offices which are parts of different governmental agencies. The general effectiveness of these services would be materially increased

² L. H. Evans, *The Job of the Librarian of Congress, an address by Luther H. Evans, Librarian of Congress, Station WTOP, Columbia Broadcasting System, Washington, D. C. . . ., July 21, 1945* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1945).

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by the creation of appropriate coordinating machinery for the federal libraries. Possibilities include the organization of a Federal Library Council, a National Library Advisory Council,³ and the continuation of the Experimental Division of Library Cooperation in the Library of Congress.⁴

THE LIBRARY SERVICE DIVISION.—The most tangible recognition of national responsibility for public library development will come with the strengthening of the Library Service Division in the Office of Education. Its objective "is to assist the libraries of the country in enlarging and extending their services."⁵ In the national plan for public libraries, the Library Service Division will perform at least four major functions.

First of all, it should be responsible for the collection and prompt publication, at regular and frequent intervals, of statistics of public library service throughout the nation. These reports should be based on standard forms developed in cooperation with the American Library Association and the state library agencies. Accurate and up-to-date facts about library service in all parts of the nation are essential in library planning. They disclose the areas of strength and weakness and provide a national view of the library scene.

Second, the Library Service Division should act as an agency of continuing evaluation, experimentation, and guidance. It should conduct surveys and research in the public library field. It should undertake experiments and demonstrations designed to stimulate the development of new types of library service and new forms of library organization. A half-dozen effective demonstrations, showing various types of larger units in action, might be definitive in changing and improving present patterns of local library service.

Third, in cooperation with the state library agencies, it should plan and participate in conferences, in-service training institutes, and workshops, and should render consultative service in the field as required.

Finally, the Division should serve as the national administrative

³ Joeckel, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66, 73.

⁴ H. A. Kellar, *Memoranda on Library Cooperation*, No. 1, September, 1941. (Washington: Library of Congress). Mimeographed.

⁵ U. S. Commissioner of Education, *Annual Report*, 1941 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1942), pp. 57, 58.

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agency for whatever forms of federal aid to libraries may be adopted by the national government.

Thus far, this potentially important agency in the postwar library program has had only a token appropriation from the federal government. A substantial increase in its budget is essential if its work is to be really effective.

FIELD SERVICES OF FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The activities of the federal government are spread throughout the nation by means of branch agencies and direct services of many kinds. It is through these activities that local libraries have most direct contact with federal programs of education and information.

The provision of books for the adult blind through the Library of Congress is a well-conceived example of cooperation between the federal government and a selected group of state and other libraries. The printing of books in raised characters and the manufacture of "talking books" comprise "the largest single publishing enterprise"⁶ of the Library of Congress. These books are made available to blind readers through twenty-five regional distributing libraries and enjoy the federal franking privilege in the mails. This well-established service should be continued. The twenty-five libraries which cooperate in the project receive no financial assistance from the federal government for the administration of the project. Moreover, a number of the libraries are responsible for service to blind readers outside their normal service boundaries. Eventually, such libraries should be aided by federal money grants as well as by allotments of books.

Another outstanding example of federal cooperation with state and local library authorities in the provision of library service is found in the Tennessee Valley Authority. In this area, regional libraries have been established for service both to TVA service personnel and to residents of the various districts. State library and educational agencies, county governments, and local library units have been drawn into cooperative agreements. The influence of the federal authority in the development of these significant experiments has been

⁶U. S. Library of Congress, *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1944*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1945), p. 110.

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conspicuous and deserves wide interest. If other federal regional authorities are established, similar cooperative library projects should be undertaken.

The existence of a well-organized and complete network of public library agencies throughout the nation is essential to the full success of the various federal educational programs. Among these, the great nation-wide program of rural adult education known as the Agricultural Extension Service is outstanding. This undertaking embraces recreational as well as educational aspects and is by no means confined to agricultural subjects. It represents the concern of the federal government with greater equality of opportunity for rural people. Pamphlet material in vast quantities supports the many projects. These publications, however, while not confined to agricultural topics, are for the most part utilitarian in content. The need for books and library service in this great program is obvious; in many places, close cooperation between agricultural agents and library authorities has produced excellent results. However, since more than half of the rural population of the nation lives in areas without libraries, the effectiveness of the program is materially reduced. Clearly, the federal government has a stake in the development of rural library service.

Field activities of the federal government make much use of libraries, either as distribution points or as direct service centers. The function of the library as a distributing agency was greatly augmented during the war. As a means of direct communication with the people, the library has played an important part, serving frequently as a channel for information of immediate concern. The State Department, Office of War Information, and agencies concerned with civilian defense, price control, food production and conservation, health maintenance, and victory loan campaigns solicited the aid of libraries as outlets for information on vital international and domestic issues. Obviously, the services of libraries should also be enlisted in the peacetime activities of the federal government.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC, REFERENCE, AND INDEXING SERVICES.—Federal libraries in Washington exist primarily for service to Congress and to the administrative arms of the government, but many of their services are of direct benefit to libraries and research throughout the

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nation. Piece by piece, an impressive array of bibliographic machinery has been constructed in Washington—partly as by-products of the present functions of the federal libraries, partly through grants from individuals and foundations, and partly through deliberate planning by the agencies concerned. The term “bibliographic machinery” is here used to cover the widest possible range of indexing services, including card catalogs of library holdings, indexes and check lists of documents of all kinds, and catalogs and lists of books on many subjects and in many special collections. The specific items described below are only selected examples of a great array of similar tools.

The time is ripe for the libraries of the federal government to perfect and to systematize the various elements in this complicated bibliographic apparatus. Of the list of bibliographic enterprises suggested in the following paragraphs, some are already fully in operation, some are in part new, but the genesis of all is already clearly evident.

The Library of Congress, now fully established as the national library, is the natural focus for this machinery. It recognizes its responsibility to libraries and to scholars as one of its major concerns. Its reference facilities and those of other federal libraries provide a highly competent type of service to scholars and research workers throughout the nation.

The strategic position already achieved by the Library of Congress in scholarship and research makes it inevitable that it should be formally recognized as the national center for bibliographic information. It should coordinate the services of the various regional bibliographic centers, such as those of Philadelphia, Denver, Seattle, and others as they are organized. Bibliographic publications, prepared by specialists on its staff, embrace many fields of human knowledge. The vast resources of the largest library in the world are thus made known to research workers and serious students throughout the country. Recent study of its publishing and bibliographic activities looks toward a more integrated program. A new publication, the *United States Quarterly Book List*, although designed primarily for use by the republics of the Americas, will be of great value also to the libraries of the United States, containing as it does descriptive reviews of important new books and biographical sketches of their

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authors. Likewise, its new *Quarterly Journal of Current Acquisitions* will inform the research libraries of the country of the materials currently added to the Library.

Of paramount importance to serious users of libraries everywhere is the development of the Union Catalog in the Library of Congress, "which has as its objective the recording of at least one location for every significant research title represented in American libraries."⁷ Many important research libraries are cooperating in this project, with the result that the scholarly resources of the entire nation are made increasingly accessible. Work on this basic research tool should proceed as rapidly as possible.

The existence of the Union Catalog places upon the Library of Congress the obligation to act as a national center for interlibrary loans for research purposes. Eventually, it may be anticipated, the national library will not only furnish information concerning the locations of needed titles but will also participate actively in the interloan process.

The compilation and publication of a definitive national bibliography of American imprints also appears to be a natural and appropriate federal responsibility. The *American Imprints Catalog*, to which the Library of Congress holds title, covers American publications through 1876 and later for some states.⁸ This inventory, together with the privately compiled bibliographies of American publications, constitutes a substantially complete historical background for a national bibliography. For the current publications, the *Catalog of Copyright Entries*, and the *Cumulative Catalog of Library of Congress Printed Cards*, both issued regularly by the Library of Congress, provide a satisfactory base for a complete record. With this substantial beginning, the compilation, as a national service, of a complete and continuing national bibliography seems a reasonable possibility. This project is not likely to be undertaken by any other than a national agency.

In the field of subject bibliography, also, many federal agencies are becoming increasingly active. Numerous current bibliographies and digests of publications in specific subject fields, of which the

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁸ U. S. Library of Congress, *op. cit.*, 1942, p. 48.

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Bibliography of Agriculture, compiled by the Department of Agriculture Library, is an outstanding example, are now regularly issued by various federal libraries. The further development of federal bibliographic enterprises should be carefully planned and coordinated.

As part of the system of bibliographic apparatus, the library agencies of the national government should strengthen and extend the present array of catalogs and indexes of public documents and current legislation. Already the federal government has made itself responsible for the cataloging of federal and state documents and the indexing of federal and state legislation. It is in a strategic position, likewise, to undertake similar comprehensive services in the field of municipal and local government. In the national system of bibliographic machinery, the broad area of public documents—federal, state, and local—should be assigned to the federal government.

This nation is on the eve of unparalleled developments in research. In these great postwar developments the national government and its libraries must participate to the fullest extent. The ultimate goal should be to make the past and future findings of research quickly and surely available everywhere through interlibrary cooperation, bibliographic and reference services, and abstracting and translating services.⁹ The activities suggested in preceding paragraphs are only the beginning of a much more far-reaching plan.

Participating in this complex machinery of research activities will be government, learned societies, educational foundations and institutions, and industry.¹⁰ The precise role of the federal libraries in the future organization of research resources remains to be determined, but inevitably it will be one of major importance. Some of the functions will be performed directly by federal agencies; others will almost necessarily be performed in federal libraries, just as the *Union List of Serials* was compiled in the Library of Congress. The more the collections of the federal libraries are enlarged and their bibliographic devices perfected, the more essential will be the role of the national government in organized research.

⁹ Vannevar Bush, *Science the Endless Frontier, a Report to the President* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1945), pp. 112-15.

¹⁰ American Library Association. Committee on Indexing and Abstracting in the Major Fields of Research, "A Plan for Proposed Unified Indexing and Abstracting Service," *A.L.A. Bulletin*, XXXIX (October 15, 1945), 426-27.



CATALOGING AND CLASSIFICATION SERVICES

In the related field of cataloging and classification, the Library of Congress has provided the libraries of the nation with technical services of basic importance. The standards it has set in cataloging and classification have become models for the nation. As a by-product of the classification and cataloging of its own collections, it makes available at a nominal price to libraries printed catalog cards for all materials processed by the Library itself and also by the group of libraries cooperating with it. About 7,500 libraries of all types subscribe to this service. Included on the cards are both Library of Congress classification numbers, generally acknowledged to be best suited to the needs of scholarly libraries, and Dewey Decimal classification numbers, used in the great majority of public libraries.

This system of card distribution, as already stated, has developed as a by-product. Cards are prepared for use in the huge catalogs of the Library of Congress; but they are not always well adapted to the needs of the average public library. Forms of author entries and many subject headings are often too complex for use in small libraries. If the full potential advantages of this great system of centralized cataloging are to be achieved, it may be necessary to inaugurate an entirely separate series of printed cards designed for use by public libraries. For example, a great need for popular libraries of all sizes is a special series of catalog cards with descriptive book annotations. Standard scores for readability of the titles in this series might also be shown on the catalog cards. The annual publication of annotated catalog cards for approximately 2,000 selected titles would meet the needs of the great majority of public libraries. The national library is already deeply committed to the centralized production of catalog cards for American libraries. The next and logical step is to adapt this service to the needs of popular libraries in such a way that it may be most economical and useful.

Further study of this problem of providing a simplified series of catalog cards for public library use might indicate that publication of the catalog in cumulative book form would be most useful for many small libraries and for many branches in large library systems. A project of this kind would greatly reduce the time and cost of cataloging in public libraries.

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DISTRIBUTION OF FEDERAL PUBLICATIONS

The federal government operates a publishing business of colossal proportions. On its list of publications it carries 65,000 titles and claims an annual sale of 18 million items. These publications are issued presumably for the information of the people of the United States. Relatively few are confidential in character. The national government has recognized libraries as logical channels through which federal documents should be made available to the people. A network of 555 depository libraries is designated to receive free one copy each of all publications which are for general distribution. The privilege of selection granted to these libraries has reduced to about 124 the number of libraries which receive all classes of material available to them. Other libraries may secure documents by various arrangements, sometimes free, but more often by purchase from the Superintendent of Documents. These provisions scarcely amount to a systematic plan of distribution, especially for the quantities needed for popular use.

The complex and cumbersome procedures now in effect could be reduced to a minimum by the adoption of a single simple principle: Public documents should be made freely available to libraries in such quantities as are actually needed. This rule would bring to "the people of a democratic society . . . free of charge those publications of their government in which they are interested."¹¹

FEDERAL GRANTS-IN-AID TO LIBRARIES

The foregoing brief review of federal library relations makes it apparent that the national government recognizes a considerable obligation to libraries and that its services are many, some of them as by-products of its major activities, others as direct acknowledgment of responsibility. It is also evident that the government uses libraries as tools or channels for the dissemination of information. All this represents close cooperation between national and local authorities in library activities. But the public libraries of America need more than cooperation and services from the federal government.

¹¹ L. C. Merritt, *The United States Government as Publisher* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943), pp. 147, 150.

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EQUALIZATION GRANTS TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES.—The present great inequality in public library service throughout the nation can be fully corrected only by a permanent system of federal grants-in-aid to libraries. National subsidies in substantial amounts are essential if the basic goal of a high minimum level of library support is to be achieved. In a nation in which per capita income in the several states varies almost as much as three to one, and among major geographic regions almost as much as two to one,¹² state and local effort alone will not produce the amounts required to finance an adequate public library system. It is reasonable to expect state and local governments to make an *equal effort* to support public libraries, but it is obvious that equal effort in the form of tax rates or appropriations will not produce equal per capita revenues for all libraries throughout the nation.

Federal aid to libraries, based on the premise that an intelligent and informed citizenry is a national need fully as much as a state need, should be designed to promote a high, nation-wide minimum of library service. The amount appropriated annually should begin at not less than \$15 million and should be advanced to \$30 million over a period of five years, during which state plans for the use of federal grants should be tested and perfected. The proposed grants would provide a great stimulus to the public library system of the country. They would go far toward closing the present great gaps in public library coverage.

Raising the national level of library service and advancement of public libraries as unique instruments of education would be the goal of such a program. Local autonomy in the use of federal grants should be safeguarded, but ample provision should also be made for such national direction as would insure maintaining, and gradual raising of, service standards. Administration on the national level should be vested in the Library Service Division in the Office of Education, but grants to the states should be directly administered by state library agencies, which will understand local plans, conditions, and needs. State agencies should file with the Library Service

¹² C. F. Schwartz and R. E. Graham, Jr., "State Income Payments in 1945," U. S. Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, *Survey of Current Business*, XXVI (August, 1946), 11-22.

Division their plans for the use of federal grants. Over-all plans for administration should provide for a minimum of federal control, except as necessary to insure the use of funds for the purposes designated.

The proposal just made calls for continuing aid to the whole public library system of the nation through federal subsidies. In addition, federal funds should be made available for other projects of a more specialized character.

GRANTS FOR LIBRARY BUILDINGS.—Any postwar program of public works should give consideration to the building needs of libraries. As pointed out in Chapters II and X, there is urgent need for remodeling, enlargement, or replacement of many existing library buildings, as well as for an extensive building program to supply the needs of 35 million people as yet unserved by libraries. Local inability to meet these needs to any considerable extent is fairly evident from the generally inadequate per capita support of libraries. States in which the average annual support is three, ten, or thirteen cents per capita are not likely to witness a library building program of necessary proportions.

GRANTS TO METROPOLITAN LIBRARIES FOR REGIONAL SERVICE.—The system of federal equalization grants proposed above would insure at least a minimum level of library support in all parts of the nation. Through a network of local libraries, *some* library service, at least, would be available to substantially all people. But such a system of grants alone could not raise the general quality of service to the level of the high metropolitan standard maintained in some of the great American public libraries. Libraries in small or medium-sized communities, however good, cannot possibly provide the many diversified and specialized services available in the large municipal libraries—any more than the small local hospital can provide the same quality and variety of service provided by the great metropolitan medical center. The large metropolitan libraries contain great stocks of books and other materials, well-organized and costly systems of bibliographic apparatus, information services in business and other fields, and their personnel includes specialists in reading, in adult education, and in many fields of knowledge. They stand potentially ready to serve the people of their natural geographical regions, just as the

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public utilities, the great hospitals, banks, and retail stores stand ready to serve the same regions.

The public libraries in metropolitan cities, as shown in the following chapter, serve to a considerable extent as natural reference centers for entire regions. Smaller libraries throughout these regions cannot, and should not, provide the resources needed for the research worker or for the general reader whose needs and interests extend beyond the relatively narrow limits of the collections available in his local library. On the other hand, it may be questioned whether the metropolitan cities, in fairness to their own taxpayers, should freely provide their special facilities to a population outside their taxing areas. While many large public libraries are already generous in giving certain types of service beyond their legal boundaries, present organization patterns and sources of library revenues obviously do not permit the extension of their potential service to its natural and logical limits.

As an important part of the national plan for public libraries, it is therefore proposed that federal grants-in-aid for regional library service be made available to a selected group of twenty or more metropolitan public libraries, strategically located throughout the nation. Under the terms of these grants the designated libraries would make their collections and their facilities available to libraries and to readers in their respective regions.

It is not the intent of this plan to set up a group of metropolitan regional libraries as competitors of the present state libraries. In general, this proposal for metropolitan centers would be subject to certain general limitations. First, the functions of the state libraries would remain unchanged, and certain of the larger ones might be designated as regional centers. Second, library users would normally obtain materials readily available in state and local libraries from those libraries. The services requested of the metropolitan libraries would usually be special in character and beyond the scope of other libraries which the reader might use.

Except for these limitations, readers in any region might use the metropolitan center library under the following conditions:

1. Individuals in any community throughout each region would be permitted to use the facilities of the central metropolitan library

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in person on the same basis as residents of the city—for reference, readers' advisory service, and for home circulation.

2. Individuals anywhere in the region would be permitted to use the central library by mail or telephone.

3. Local libraries throughout the region might freely call upon the regional center for bibliographic service and for advice from the specialists on its staff as required.

Thus the most isolated rural or small-town reader would have access to the same kind of library service enjoyed by the resident of the metropolitan community. He would have available not only the "minimum" service of his local library but also the "maximum" service offered by the best large public libraries. This maximum service would be provided by a natural and easy extension of existing metropolitan library facilities to the relatively small group of readers sufficiently interested to use the central library in person or to communicate their inquiries and needs by mail or telephone.

Federal grants to the metropolitan centers undertaking this form of extended service should be substantial. Experimental grants might first be made in favorably situated regions in order to determine as accurately as possible the types and costs of services desired. The system of maximum-service regional centers would then be expanded gradually to cover substantially the whole country.

ROLE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION IN THE NATIONAL PLAN

Consideration has been given to the role of the national government in the advancement of public libraries and to the direct financial assistance which is necessary before all citizens can have the full benefits of library service. Another aspect of national participation in library development should be mentioned. The role assumed by the American Library Association will be, as in the past, indispensable in carrying out a national plan for libraries.

"The American Library Association is an organization of libraries, librarians, library trustees, and others interested in library service It now has 16,000 members distributed in every state and Canadian province and in the major countries of the world."¹³ One

¹³ *A.L.A. Bulletin*, XL (December 15, 1946), H-424. *A.L.A. Handbook*, 1946.

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of the chief objectives of the Association is complete and adequate library coverage, and to that end it has worked actively since 1925. Through numerous boards and committees it seeks to raise the standards and level of library activities, procedures, and personnel. With an able headquarters staff, it implements the work and recommendations of its members, and furnishes advice and stimulation to state and local library authorities. As a supplement to this brief statement, attention should be called particularly to the work and annual reports of the Library Extension Board and the Committee on Federal Relations, though the interests of no Association committee or board are unrelated to a national plan for the advancement of public libraries.

It is obvious that the American Library Association, a membership organization, cannot itself assume the responsibility for nation-wide extension of public library service. It has neither the resources nor the governmental status for such a role. Its contributions, along with those of supporting state associations, will continue to be those of planning, guiding, stimulating, and administering special grants for research and demonstrations.

SUMMARY

A national program of action in the improvement of public library service can be achieved only by the joint efforts of federal, state, and local governments. "The final result should be a cooperative partnership in library development in which the Federal government shares responsibility with the states and the local units."¹⁴ The federal portion of the joint program will include the following functions and services:

1. An enlarged and greatly strengthened national agency equipped to provide effective leadership in the extension and improvement of library service throughout the whole nation—the Library Service Division in the Office of Education.
2. A national bibliographic center in the Library of Congress, prepared through a continuing and expanded Union Catalog and appropriate bibliographic machinery to direct interlibrary loans and other services for scholars and research workers.

¹⁴ Joeckel, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

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3. Compilation by the Library of Congress of a complete and continuing national bibliography of books and pamphlets published in the United States.
4. A complete system of catalogs and indexes of federal, state, and local documents, laws, and ordinances.
5. Free distribution of government documents to libraries in quantities sufficient to meet actual needs.
6. Continuation and improvement of the project of books for the blind in the Library of Congress, with grants-in-aid for administrative costs to cooperating regional libraries.
7. Necessary library services in all regional and field services of the federal government, such as the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Agricultural Extension Service, provided by cooperation between federal, state, and local governments.
8. Provision of a greatly expanded repertory of printed cards for library catalogs, issued in varying forms suitable for use both in scholarly and popular libraries.
9. Federal grants-in-aid to libraries in a variety of forms:
 - a) Equalization grants to public libraries increasing from \$15 million to \$30 million annually, based primarily on need, and designed to assist in extending library service to all the people and to insure a high, nation-wide level of library service.
 - b) Grants for "maximum" library service to twenty or more metropolitan libraries for regional service to libraries and readers in their geographic regions.
 - c) Grants for the construction of library buildings, as part of a general public works program.

All of these services should be freely offered by the federal government to the libraries and people of the nation as part of its contribution to public education. The federal government should not direct and control local library activities but should aim at full co-operation with libraries of all kinds in building an integrated pattern of library service.

Coordination of Library Service

ACH individual, in a coordinated library system, has a right to "an open channel to specialized services."¹ Predicated on the belief that no person, because of the location of his residence, should be deprived of free access to library facilities adapted to his unique needs, proposals have been made in previous chapters for the creation of larger local areas of service and for the participation of state and federal governments in the achievement of this goal. The present chapter will consider certain cooperative steps toward greater equality in library facilities which may be achieved within the existing governmental framework.

Because of the great variety in human needs, subject interests, levels of specialization, or reading competence, even the best-equipped public libraries are subject to demands for service which cannot be supplied by their own resources. If, in the millennium, each independent library were to become wholly self-sufficient, wasteful duplication on a wide scale would result. A partial solution of this problem may be found through well-planned coordination of library resources which will strengthen the facilities of each library and will prevent needless duplication of materials and effort.

In short, the movement toward formally organized larger units of library service should be accompanied by an almost equally important movement toward informal but systematic coordination of existing library resources and services. Public libraries should cooperate not only with other public libraries, but also with school libraries, with college and university libraries, and with special libraries. Carefully planned programs of coordinated library services

¹ J. H. Kolb and E. de S. Brunner, *A Study of Rural Society, Its Organization and Changes* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1935), p. 597.

may be the initial stage on the way toward the later organization of large service units.

Broadly speaking, two major types of library cooperation may be distinguished. The first is *regional* cooperation between all types of libraries in certain geographic areas. The second is *classified* cooperation, in which libraries of each type cooperate mainly with other libraries of the same type.² Major emphasis in this chapter is placed on regional cooperation, since this method seems to fit the American library scene most realistically. In the sections which follow, the subject is developed, first, by a brief review of the devices of library cooperation and, second, by the description of typical situations in which cooperation is most needed.

DEVICES IN LIBRARY COOPERATION

The possible methods of library cooperation are many and varied. They range all the way from a few tentative experiments to an extensive system of coordinated services approximating in net results a large library unit. Most of the devices useful in cooperation are already apparent to librarians, but few, if any, have been pushed to the limits of their full possibilities. These devices may be considered briefly under the three heads: (1) organization, (2) resources, and (3) services.

ORGANIZATION OF COOPERATION.—If cooperation is to be effective in a particular region or area, it should be organized. However informal the organization may be, it provides the potential leadership necessary in planning and developing cooperative projects. Whatever the field of cooperation, careful, long-range planning is essential. Objectives, types of clientele, and service areas must be defined. The formation of a permanent council of librarians seems the obvious and essential first step³ in organizing most cooperative schemes. In order to achieve the broadest coordination of library effort, the council should probably include representatives of all types of libraries in any particular area, with the public library

² J. H. P. Pafford, *Library Co-operation in Europe* (London: The Library Association, 1935), p. 25.

³ Amy Winslow, "Library Co-ordination and Consolidation in Metropolitan Areas," in C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Library Extension: Problems and Solutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), pp. 143-44.

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representatives working closely together on special projects. The major functions of the council should be the planning and general direction of cooperative projects. It should meet regularly. Its members should feel as great responsibility for its success as for the successful administration of their own libraries, since the activities it sponsors should be mutually beneficial to all libraries concerned.

In less well-developed areas, the state library agencies should perhaps initiate and guide the advancement of regional cooperation. In the long run, however, success in cooperation will depend on conviction and determination among the local librarians directly concerned.

COOPERATION IN RESOURCES.—In the postwar years, the readiness and ability of libraries to cooperate in building their collections of books and other materials will be severely tested. Some notable examples of cooperative action of this kind may already be cited, but, in general, the effective coordination of library resources remains an urgent task for the future. The continuing production of huge quantities of printed and audio-visual materials will eventually force librarians to confront this problem with bold and comprehensive plans.

For the large libraries of the nation, cooperation in building collections means a great extension of the concept of "sponsorship for knowledge"—the voluntary assumption of responsibility for developing and maintaining strong collections in particular subject fields or in special kinds of materials. One cooperating library agrees to build up its collections in certain subjects and to devote a substantial annual outlay to increasing its holdings in these subjects, while other cooperating libraries are free to develop other subjects of special interest to them. In this movement toward subject specialization, the large metropolitan public libraries must carry their fair share of the load. But the basic principle inherent in sponsorship for knowledge may be applied also to smaller libraries; in their own more limited service areas they, too, may specialize in certain subjects or types of materials.

Hope for the future in this field of cooperation lies in the negotiation by the libraries of America of a series of basic "treaties" defining their mutual responsibilities in the development of their



collections. Sometimes these treaties will be national in scope, sometimes regional, more often, probably, metropolitan or local. The adoption of such agreements, at whatever level, will greatly strengthen and unify the resources of library groups of all kinds.

Closely related to cooperation in developing library resources is the inevitable accompanying problem of storage of surplus or little-used books. This insistent problem, which has been discussed by librarians and others for over half a century, can be solved most effectively by the building of a chain of regional reservoir libraries, strategically located throughout the country, in which the surplus materials of many libraries may be stored. The proposed nation-wide network of regional storage libraries may be jointly financed by cooperating libraries, but complete success of the project is likely to require federal and state subsidies, at least for the construction of buildings.

COOPERATION IN SERVICES.—Real success of projects for library cooperation will be achieved only by increasingly complete and unrestricted fusion of services rendered to library users. The measures used as illustrations here should be regarded only as a preliminary listing of possibilities.

The effective coordination of library resources will require, in many places, the organization of regional bibliographic or information centers, similar to those of Philadelphia, Denver, and Seattle.⁴ The basic purpose of these centers is to serve as clearinghouses for regional cooperation among library groups. They locate books and other materials and facilitate their circulation between libraries; they direct research workers and students in search of materials on particular subjects; and they initiate plans for library cooperation. In some situations, the compilation of complete or partial union catalogs may be essential; in others, regional information centers may operate successfully without these expensive tools.

The list of library functions which may be performed cooperatively is long. Groups of libraries may cooperate in selecting, buying, and cataloging books and materials. In serving readers, they

⁴*Bibliographic Centers: What They Are, What They Do, How They Serve* (Leaflet issued by The Philadelphia Bibliographic Center, The Bibliographic Center for Research, Denver, the Pacific Northwest Bibliographic Center, Seattle: 1944).

may coordinate the activities of their information departments. Readers' advisers and children's librarians may be jointly employed to serve the clientele of several libraries. Union lists of holdings of periodicals and reference books may be compiled for groups of libraries. Cooperative public relations programs may be organized, with joint use of traveling exhibits and posters. Through such projects, services to library users will be substantially increased, and costs to individual libraries reduced.

Interlibrary loan facilities among American libraries should be greatly extended and liberalized. Essential in the achievement of this goal are, first, the more systematic organization of information about the location of books and materials through regional bibliographic centers and union catalogs and, second, greater freedom in making loans available to serious general readers, as well as to scholars and research workers. The British system of "regional bureaux" for facilitating interlibrary loans has many lessons for the American librarian.⁵

In metropolitan districts and in compact areas with numerous cities and towns, substantially complete "reciprocity" among public libraries in circulating books to borrowers of other libraries should be a major objective of library coordination. In its final form this kind of reciprocity would permit registered borrowers of any library in the cooperating group to borrow books in person from any other library in the group. When state subsidies to public libraries become general and liberal in amount, it will be appropriate for the state to require that all libraries receiving state grants make their collections generally available to registered borrowers of other libraries. This would be one method of roughly equalizing the book resources available to individual readers. Library collections are now generally free to all comers for reference and information services. In a fully coordinated system of public library service, the privilege of borrowing books from more than one library should be equally free.

AREAS FOR COOPERATION

The devices of library cooperation briefly described above may be applied in many situations and many geographic areas, of which

⁵ Pafford, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-48.

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only a few of the more important are selected for consideration here.

LARGE REGIONAL AREAS.—Largest of all the areas of library cooperation are the several great natural regions of the United States. Cooperative enterprises are already well developed in several of these regions, and interest in regional cooperation is widespread. The greatest need for cooperation, perhaps, is found in regions in which total library facilities are relatively weak and geographically widely dispersed. In regions with many strong libraries, on the other hand, the need for planned coordination and accurate description of resources may be almost equally urgent.

The focal point for the coordination of library service at this level will be the regional bibliographic center. In a national plan for the more efficient correlation of book resources, provision must be made for the organization of a number of strong regional agencies of this sort. These centers will systematize their knowledge of the holdings of the libraries in their regions. Their work, in turn, will be closely linked with the national bibliographic center, which is rapidly developing in the Library of Congress.

Coordination of library resources for research will doubtless be the major objective of the regional bibliographic centers. But many of the larger public libraries will cooperate actively in regional projects, and some, like Denver, will become leaders in developing regional plans. As the demands of business, industry, and government for bibliographic services steadily increase, the need for public library participation in regional centers will become correspondingly greater.

METROPOLITAN AREAS.—The greatest opportunities, and likewise the greatest difficulties, in organized library cooperation are found in the metropolitan areas. In the 140 areas classified by the United States Census as metropolitan districts is massed nearly one half of the nation's total population and, with few exceptions, its great concentrations of library strength. Some of these metropolitan districts are also the natural centers for the great geographical regions described in the preceding section. Although most of them are more limited in their spheres of influence, nearly all are the centers for tributary areas of considerable size. It will be recalled that it was suggested in Chapter V that the public libraries in some twenty of

the large metropolitan districts should be subsidized by the national government as "maximum-service" libraries for their respective regions; to these large libraries the people of the region might turn for special services of all kinds as needed.

Many of the special services available through groups of metropolitan libraries may readily be extended to regions much larger than the metropolitan district proper. For some functions, the service area might be limited to one or two counties; for others, it might cover a dozen or more counties. Cooperative projects might be financed by contracts between large libraries and their smaller neighbors, based on costs of service rendered. Or groups of smaller libraries might jointly finance certain new types of service. Or state or federal grants might be made available for cooperative projects.

To make these general proposals more concrete, a plan of action for a cooperating group of libraries in a metropolitan area is suggested. Books for this library group are ordered for all cooperating libraries by the order department of the central library; order routines are speedy and efficient, and discount rates are materially increased. Books for all libraries are cataloged and classified by the central library. Attractive book lists on many subjects of common interest are jointly compiled and used by all the libraries. A traveling book repair specialist visits the smaller libraries on a regular schedule. Traveling collections of books in foreign languages are circulated to outlying libraries as needed. Reference and research questions which cannot be answered by smaller libraries are referred to special libraries or to the central metropolitan library. A group of itinerant specialists—readers' advisers, vocational counselors, and children's librarians—travel throughout the region, offering their services on a regular schedule advertised in advance of their visits. A working collection of educational films and music and sound recordings is jointly purchased and made available as needed anywhere in the service area. And finally, a regional storage reservoir for little-used books is erected in a central location, to which all libraries may freely send their surplus materials. This list of cooperative services might be greatly extended. The essence of the scheme is: the numerous independent libraries maintain their separate legal status, but a common reservoir of essential services is available to all

libraries in the cooperating group; and any reader has access to all the book collections in the area.

A cooperative project of a different sort is the joint maintenance of a branch library located at or near the tax boundaries of two independent public libraries. The joint branch library is thus made available to all residents of its natural area; costs are equitably divided among the cooperating library authorities; and complete amalgamation of the two library systems is not required. The example, common in many metropolitan areas, of neighbors living on opposite sides of the street but with totally different library service is sufficient proof of the need for such common-sense cooperative arrangements.

SUBURBAN AREAS.—Within many large metropolitan areas are found groups of suburban communities which form relatively compact and homogeneous units. Westchester County in the New York metropolitan area, the "North Shore" towns and the "Burlington group" in Chicago, the "Peninsula" communities south of San Francisco—these are examples of many similar groups. These subdivisions of the metropolitan complex afford unusually favorable opportunities for library cooperation, and several instances of good beginnings in coordinated service might be cited. Beginning with union check lists of periodicals and reference holdings, and planned specialization in important subject fields, these cooperating groups might continue by permitting complete reciprocity in borrowers' privileges, which would permit any borrower of any library in the group to borrow books in person or by interlibrary loan from any other co-operating library.⁶ These favorably situated suburban areas should lead the way in bold experimentation in cooperative projects.

AREAS WITH NUMEROUS INDEPENDENT LIBRARIES.—Equally favorable opportunities for library cooperation are found in many non-metropolitan areas in which public libraries cluster closely together. The library map of the East and the Midwest, for example, is thickly dotted with many town and small-city libraries, often only a few miles from their library neighbors in near-by communities. Most of the devices of cooperation suggested above for metropolitan and sub-

⁶ A number of contracts of this sort have been made between public libraries in the Los Angeles area.

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urban areas may be applied with equal effectiveness to regions of this sort. Usually the region has a natural center—perhaps a county seat or a major trading center—which is in a favorable position to assume leadership in a cooperative project. Eventually, these types of informal cooperation may develop into more formally organized federated library groups, aided by state subsidies, such as those previously proposed in Chapter III.

COOPERATION BETWEEN PUBLIC AND COLLEGE LIBRARIES.—In hundreds of American communities, public and college libraries exist side by side. True, they are established to serve different clienteles, but to a considerable degree the reading interests of their respective constituencies overlap. Many books in college libraries are of interest to general readers in the town, and many college students have occasion to use public library books. The need for cooperation between the two types of libraries is evident; the smaller the community, the greater it is likely to be.

College libraries and public libraries located in the same town should carefully determine their respective fields of specialization and emphasis in building up their book collections. They should exchange information concerning titles ordered, or under consideration, in order to prevent unnecessary duplication. The catalogs of each library should contain entries for important items in the collection of the other. Each library, likewise, should be thoroughly familiar with the reference and periodical resources of the other.

So far as possible, reciprocity in circulation privileges should be permitted between the college and town communities. College students, as temporary residents of the town, should be permitted to register as public library borrowers; and citizens of the town should be permitted, with reasonable limitations, to use the college library. Thoroughgoing coordination of resources and service between the two libraries will materially strengthen each institution in meeting the needs of its own readers.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES.—There is no invariable general rule for cooperation between school libraries and public libraries, but the guiding principle which should apply is plain: "School libraries and the public library should work together to provide a coordinated and complete library service to school children

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without unnecessary duplication of activities."⁷ Both school libraries and public libraries are supported by the same public, and both agencies serve common age groups. Each must see clearly its own role in a combined pattern of service to children and young people; likewise, each must understand and respect the role of the other.

The line of demarcation between the service of school libraries and public libraries will not be drawn at the same point in all places. In large urban communities, probably, it will be drawn most easily and most definitely. In small towns and in rural areas, on the other hand, cooperation between the two types of libraries is most essential. In these areas of sparse population and limited tax resources, a formula for joint cooperative service should be developed by continued study and experimentation.

SUMMARY

Coordination in services between neighboring public libraries, or between public libraries and libraries of other types, seeks to achieve, without change in the existing governmental and administrative structure, some of the ends best attained, perhaps, by a thorough overhauling of the existing pattern of library service. If library authorities are firmly convinced of the values and possibilities of cooperation, library service in many communities and areas may be greatly improved.

A comprehensive scheme of library coordination should include the following essential features:

1. Its operation should be planned and directed by a council of librarians representing the libraries included in the project.
2. Definite agreements should be made among the cooperating libraries covering their respective fields of specialization in acquiring books and other materials.
3. Libraries should experiment actively with a wide range of common cooperative services to their combined groups of readers.

⁷ American Library Association. Division of Libraries for Children and Young People, *School Libraries for Today and Tommorow: Functions and Standards*, prepared by the Committees on Post-War Planning of the American Library Association, Division of Libraries for Children and Young People and Its Section, The American Association of School Librarians, Mrs. Mary Peacock Douglas, Chairman. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1945), p. 9.

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One of the most important of these services is complete reciprocity in circulation privileges designed to permit all readers to borrow books from any library in the group.

These devices of cooperation may be used in varied ways in different geographic areas. In the great geographic regions of the nation, the process of coordination will have its focus in the regional bibliographic center, which will systematize information about the library resources of the region. In the metropolitan areas, in groups of suburban towns, or in areas with numerous independent libraries, the goal should be the development of a common pool of services, freely available to the people of the region. Likewise, every effort should be made to coordinate the functions of public libraries with those of college libraries and school libraries.

Public Library Finance

WITHOUT adequate income, good library service is impossible. To provide the kind of public library system proposed in this national plan will require revenues far in excess of present levels. These additional amounts are needed for personnel of high quality, for ample stocks of books and audio-visual materials, and for attractive and efficient buildings—not only in favored communities, but also throughout the whole nation. The sums named are large, but they must be obtained if American libraries are to realize their full potentialities as intelligence centers for all the people.

ESSENTIALS OF SOUND FINANCIAL STRUCTURE

A public institution must rest on a sound financial structure. It should be able to guarantee to its constituency proper returns based on clear-cut objectives and a long-term plan of development. Its revenues should be dependable, so that operational commitments can be made and continuity of service assured. The public library is no exception to this general rule.

Public library income should have a sound basis in law. Sources of revenue should be assured, within reasonable limits, and final authority for determining the annual library income should be vested in the legislative body of the political unit or units served by the library.¹

Libraries are nonprofit institutions, and their returns to society are of an intangible quality which is as yet only partially subject to measurement. Yet their benefits are demonstrable, and requests for funds should be justifiable to appropriating bodies in terms of needed community services and of past achievements. The American people

¹ American Library Association. Committee on Post-War Planning, *Post-War Standards for Public Libraries* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1943), pp. 54-55.

have, for the most part, been willing from the beginning to tax themselves generously for public education. With public libraries oriented primarily toward educational objectives, funds for library development and extension should be forthcoming.

Whether the library is to be supported by a special tax levy or by an appropriation from general funds is a question which usually may be left for general trends in public finance to determine.² "If the library tax rate is variable within reasonable limits, either method permits the appropriating authority to determine the actual amount allocated to the public library."³ In the future, it seems probable that libraries, like other governmental agencies, will tend to rely more heavily on sources of revenue other than the general property tax.

Adequacy of library revenues may be measured in terms of two accepted standards. The first measures library financial resources in terms of annual per capita expenditures. The second measures the library's income in terms of the total minimum income below which no library unit, regardless of size, should fall. These two standards are inseparable; neither should be applied without the other.

The American Library Association's Committee on Postwar Planning has proposed as standards for annual per capita support for public libraries: \$1.50 for "minimum" service, \$2.25 for "good" service, and \$3.00 for "superior" service.⁴ These amounts can be justified by long observation of good public libraries in action or by statistical analysis of the costs of library functions and operations. The achievement of a national minimum income of \$1.50 per capita annually is therefore a primary goal in all library planning. The standards here stated are based on the assumption that the operating costs of school libraries are borne by school districts, not by the public library. In cities and counties in which school libraries are administered by the public library, total income per capita should be substantially increased.

The standard of minimum total income for a public library has

² E. A. Wight, *Public Library Finance and Accounting* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1943), pp. 27-31.

³ American Library Association. Committee on Post-War Planning, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁴ This recommendation increases the amounts \$1.00, \$1.50, and \$2.00 fixed as standards in *Post-War Standards for Public Libraries*, p. 56.



been set by the Committee on Postwar Planning of the American Library Association at \$37,500 annually.⁵ Experience and research alike demonstrate the fact that adequate library income cannot be provided until taxing and service areas are made considerably larger than is the general rule today. This conclusion may be justified by estimating the minimum costs of the essential elements in efficient library service and by showing that these cannot be financed for less than \$37,500 annually.⁶ Martin's study in 1944, already cited in a previous chapter, concludes that essential elements of service were not generally attained until annual incomes reached the figure of approximately \$40,000.⁷ In 1947, this amount should be increased to approximately \$60,000.

A combination of these two standards makes it obvious that a population of 25,000 is usually required to provide the minimum essentials of good library service. The public library in a small community may meet the specific standards of income per capita but still come far from providing the essential services to its people. On the other hand, a library in a larger city may easily meet the standard for minimum total support, but its low per capita income may make its service inadequate both in quantity and quality.

NATIONAL NEEDS

The three purposes for which increased library revenues are needed are (1) for current operating revenues, (2) for capital outlays for new buildings and reconditioning of outmoded structures, and (3) for capital outlays for the initial book stocks of new libraries and the replenishment of book stocks in many older libraries. Only an integrated federal-state-local program of library support is likely to produce the sums required for these three purposes.

REVENUES FOR CURRENT OPERATION.—Based on the standard of \$1.50 per capita for minimum service fixed by the American Library Association's Committee on Postwar Planning, at least \$200 million is needed annually for the support of public library service to the

⁵ This is an increase from \$25,000, previously recommended. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-47.

⁷ Lowell Martin, "The Optimum Size of the Public Library Unit," in C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Library Extension: Problems and Solutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), pp. 32-46. See p. 35, *supra*.

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entire population. This provides for an estimated population of 140 million. It will take time to reach this new national level of library support. But this goal must be reached if all the American people are to have a satisfactory minimum of public library service.

A large share of the proposed increase in public library revenues must be assumed by the state and federal governments. In recent years, local governments "have felt the pinch of limited resources,"⁸ and the national government and the states must come to their aid, especially in the general field of public education. It is therefore proposed that the total sum of \$200 million for the annual operation of public libraries be divided approximately as follows among the local, state, and federal governments:

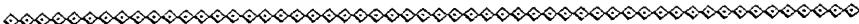
Source	Total Appropriation	Approximate Per Cent of Total
Local Appropriation	\$120 million	60
State Aid	50 million	25
Federal Aid	30 million	15
Total	<u>\$200 million</u>	<u>100</u>

This suggested division of financial responsibility among the three levels of government corresponds rather closely to present and proposed plans for the distribution of expenditures for general government and for educational purposes. In 1942 school districts received 36 per cent of their revenues from other governments. In the same year, general local governments received 25 per cent of their revenues from other governments.⁹ And in a careful study of postwar fiscal requirements of the nation in 1949, the Brookings Institution proposes that 37 per cent of the total cost of local education be borne by state grants-in-aid.¹⁰ Thus, the allocation of at least 25 per cent of the local support of public libraries to the states appears to be in line with current trends in the financing of public services of general interest.

⁸ J. P. Harris, "States and Cities," in *Book of the States*, 1945-46, Vol. VI (Chicago: The Council of State Governments, 1945), p. 49.

⁹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Governmental Finances in the United States*, 1942 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1945), pp. 14, 16.

¹⁰ L. H. Kimmel, *Postwar Fiscal Requirements: Federal, State, and Local* (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1945), p. 87.



Likewise, the quota of 15 per cent proposed as the federal contribution to local public library support seems justified by the great disparities among the states in average income per capita and in density of population, already discussed in Chapter V. Universal library coverage, with special emphasis on rural areas having little or no library service, must be one concern of the federal government as it looks to the general welfare of the people.

But the financial plan for adequate library revenues must rest upon a sound foundation of reasonable local effort to support public libraries. The proposed share of local government in library support is fixed at 60 per cent of the total requirements, or approximately \$120 million annually. This is \$50 million in excess of total public library revenues in 1946. Since this proposed local contribution would be distributed over the entire nation, the average local expenditure would be approximately \$0.90 per capita, as compared with \$0.72 per capita in 1946 for the population actually served by public libraries.¹¹ It should be possible for local governments to increase their total public library expenditures to the extent suggested.

The proportionate contributions of the local, state, and federal governments outlined above, it should be emphasized, are proposed only as an over-all total. Necessarily, proportions will vary from state to state and from local unit to local unit, in accordance with different plans adopted for state and local finance and in accordance with taxpaying ability. Proportions will change as fiscal policies change, but there can be little question of the need for the total sum of \$200 million for the annual support of public libraries in the United States.

CAPITAL OUTLAYS FOR BUILDINGS AND BOOKS.—Thus far, this consideration of the financial needs of American public libraries has been limited to revenues for current operation. But before libraries can operate successfully, they must be housed in appropriate buildings and stocked with modern collections of books and other materials. Revenues for these purposes can be obtained only in small

¹¹ American Library Association, *Equal Chance Supplement* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1947). Revision (using 1945-1946 figures) of tables pp. 26-31 in 1943 ed.



part from current operating funds; in general, they must be derived from capital outlays. These outlays are obviously most urgently needed in the areas now totally without public libraries, but they are also badly needed in the many areas of the nation in which present library service is below minimum standards.

To provide library buildings for the 35 million Americans now living in areas without public libraries, and also new and remodeled buildings in areas with substandard library service, it is estimated that a capital outlay of at least \$500 million will be required.¹² The need for this amount is justified in detail in Chapter X, "The Public Library Building Program."

For the original book stocks of new libraries for 35 million people, \$125 million is the lowest estimate of actual needs. These new libraries should be stocked with a minimum of 50 million volumes at an average cost of \$2.50 per volume. For the replenishment of book collections in the substandard libraries, another \$50 million should be made available.

A minimum sum of \$675 million in capital outlays, then, is needed to bring the buildings and book collections of American public libraries up to standard. The length of the period during which this amount is to be raised will depend upon the rate of library extension to new areas and also upon the raising of library standards throughout the nation. No prediction of the time required is hazarded. Given a period of general prosperity and successful operation of the national economy, with corresponding success in library planning and leadership, large-scale physical rehabilitation of public library resources might be achieved within a decade.

It will require the joint efforts of all levels of government to raise the capital sums required for buildings and books for public libraries. Many communities should be able to finance their own needs; many others will need assistance from the states and the nation. The greatest hope for the attainment of library needs lies in the inclusion of library buildings in general public works programs. Library

¹² United States National Resources Planning Board, *National Resources Development Report for 1943. Part I: Post-War Plan and Program* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1943), p. 73. The sum of \$400 million recommended by the Planning Board is increased to \$500 million to provide, in part at least, for increased building costs.

authorities and governmental agencies must be ready with their blueprints when funds for public buildings programs become generally available.

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

The substantial increases in public library revenues proposed above should be accompanied by improved procedures in the financial administration of libraries. In an integrated national plan for public library service, in which local, state, and federal governments participate, the many authorities involved should report their expenditures fully and promptly, and efficient financial administration must be assured. A few key points essential in financial administration are selected for emphasis here.

The financial procedures of the library should be recognized as essential tools of administration. The board of trustees, or other governing authority, takes an active part in securing adequate support for the library and assumes responsibility for fiscal policies. The librarian, as chief executive of the library, is its financial administrator. He prepares the budget for consideration by the board and municipal or county authorities and expends library funds within the budget and financial policies approved by the board.

The budget is the key to successful financial administration of the library. It balances planned expenditures against estimated revenues. Its total amount is determined by the immediate service program of the library and also by the library's long-range financial plan, providing each year for definite steps toward future objectives.

In preparing the annual budget, the library administrator must determine what proportion of total operating expenditures shall be allotted to each of the three major subdivisions of the budget: salaries of the library staff; books, periodicals, and binding; and miscellaneous operating expenditures, including salaries of the building staff. It would be unwise to prescribe inflexible proportions for these three items which should apply invariably to all libraries or to any library at all periods in its financial history. As a general norm applicable to many public libraries, the following proportions of expenditures may be suggested: 60 per cent for library salaries; 20 per cent for books, periodicals, and binding; and 20 per cent

for other operating expenditures. In many other libraries, especially in larger cities, it may be desirable to adopt a 65-17.5-17.5 per cent ratio for these three items. Whatever distribution formula is used, the total budget should be large enough to provide adequate funds for both salaries and books. When total library income per capita is seriously below standard, it may be impossible to conform to standard proportions in expenditures.

In the development of the library plan, an integrated system of financial reporting is essential. To provide local, state, and federal authorities and interested citizen groups with a clear view of the distribution of the cost of library operations, financial reports must be complete, accurate, and prompt. So far as possible, library authorities should follow standard forms for financial reporting approved by state library agencies, the American Library Association, and the Library Service Division of the United States Office of Education. Likewise, accounting, auditing, and purchasing procedures should conform to the best financial standards of public administration.

Finally, progress of the national library plan will be facilitated by the use of improved methods of cost accounting in public libraries. Unit costs of library functions and operation should be carefully analyzed in public libraries of different sizes and types. More reliable data on the costs of library operation under various types of library organization will provide information of basic importance to experiments in the development of larger units of service.

SUMMARY

The success of the national library plan depends upon the adequacy of its financing. Support of the public library should be guaranteed by sound legislation so that continuity of service may be assured.

A combination of two inseparable financial standards should be used as the measuring stick of the adequacy of library revenues. In annual income per capita for the population served, library income should range from \$1.50 for minimum service to \$3.00 for superior service. In total annual income, no library unit should fall below \$37,500 annually. Unless public libraries meet both these standards, they are not likely to be efficient.

PUBLIC LIBRARY FINANCE

For the financing of the national library plan, large increases in library income will be required, and only a combined program of federal-state-local support can be expected to raise the amounts needed. Current operation of a public library system serving the entire population of the United States calls for a total of at least \$200 million annually. It is proposed that this sum be distributed among the levels of government approximately in the following proportions: 60 per cent from local units, 25 per cent from the states, and 15 per cent from the federal government.

In addition to current operating revenues, it is estimated that capital outlays of \$500 million for new buildings and for enlargement and repair of older structures are needed over a period of several years. An additional outlay of \$175 million is needed to stock new libraries with books and to replenish the collections of substandard libraries. These capital sums should be obtained, when possible, from funds allocated to public works programs.

Great responsibility attaches to the methods of financial administration employed in the use of the largely increased library revenues recommended. Modern procedures in budgeting and cost accounting should be followed. For the purposes of long-range planning, it is particularly important that complete and integrated reports of library financial operations be published regularly and promptly by all agencies of government.

Books and Library Materials

AT THIS point in the national library plan, emphasis shifts from the pattern of library organization to library operations. Previous chapters have been mainly concerned with proposals for a scheme of organization for the postwar public library system. It now remains to implement this framework by a series of chapters on other aspects of the library plan. First consideration is given to the books and other materials which make up the collection of the library.¹

This subject may be introduced by observing that the pattern of library organization proposed in this national plan will eventually have a significant effect on the materials which the library collects. As the units of library service steadily increase in size and income, the size of the library's book stock will increase correspondingly in the number of volumes available for use. Equally important will be the increase in the bibliographic spread of the larger collections, measured by the number of titles they contain. A large library system equal in volume content to many small libraries will usually have in its collection more *titles* than the small libraries combined.

Moreover, in a planned library economy, no library need be limited by the size or scope of its own collection. As its second line of service it may call on the collections of the state libraries and the great metropolitan libraries, as described in previous chapters.² And cooperative arrangements with neighboring libraries will make the

¹ For a more general treatment of this subject, see American Library Association. Committee on Post-War Planning, *Post-War Standards for Public Libraries* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1943), pp. 66-74; C. B. Roden, "Standards for the Public Library Book Collection," in E. M. Danton, ed., *The Library of Tomorrow: A Symposium* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1939), pp. 87-95; C. B. Roden, "Theories of Book Selection for Public Libraries," in L. R. Wilson, ed., *The Practice of Book Selection* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), pp. 1-19.

² See pp. 58-59, 79-81.

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book stocks of all libraries available to readers in all communities in the cooperating group. Agreements between groups of libraries as to fields of specialization in their respective collections will also serve to strengthen the joint resources of libraries in natural regions. As the mechanism of cooperation becomes in reality a closely integrated system, the books and materials of many libraries in states and regions will become more nearly a fluid collection, standing ready to supply the needs of all serious readers, regardless of the particular political units in which they may happen to live.

THE COLLECTION OF THE POSTWAR LIBRARY

The postwar public library will doubtless change more radically in the character of the books and other materials it assembles for its users than in any other respect. The library dares not fail to adapt its collection and its services to changing methods of communicating information and ideas. How sweeping these changes will be can only be conjectured; at the very least, they will be extensive.

The public library will continue to rely upon the book as its foundation. The heart of the library will doubtless remain a collection of *books*, carefully selected, properly classified and cataloged, maintained in good physical condition, accurately recorded when in circulation by a standard charging system. When worn out in service, these volumes will presumably be replaced by new copies or by new titles of greater utility. No librarian is likely to deny the continuing need for this sound backlog of resources in *print*.

But it seems probable that the postwar public library will become much less formal in its methods of recording and servicing a considerable portion of its printed materials. For example, it may stock in multiple copies large numbers of standard paper-bound books and pamphlets, perhaps similar in format to the Armed Services Editions. Copies may be sold to readers at cost or exchanged for other titles on a piece-for-piece basis without making formal charging records. Bold experimentation with this and similar methods of mass distribution of materials may result in reaching entirely new sources of readers.

But the progressive public library is much more than a collection of books. Traditional conceptions of the library already find a place



for periodicals and newspapers, pamphlets, government publications, maps, pictures, sheet music, and local history records of all kinds. The modern librarian, moreover, sees in many of these traditional materials great new possibilities as instruments of popular education. Pamphlets and convenient, paper-bound books are frequently effective educational tools, prepared by experts skilled in graphic, condensed, readable methods of presenting information. The alert library today, if it is awake to possibilities, makes these materials available in quantity, displays them with skill, and gives them away if sufficient numbers can be secured free of charge. The building up of a picture collection becomes a major project. Pictorial and graphic material on every available subject is lent for use by teachers, parents, illustrators, group leaders, advertising men, and even for home decoration. A map is no longer a reference item to be consulted only in the library, but goes traveling, to home, conference, or office with the user. Government publications, despite their bibliographical complexities, are recognized as sources of vital information which must by any conceivable short cut be placed in the hands of the user with all possible speed.

Newer types of records are rapidly finding their places in the modern library. Music recordings are made available, accompanied by scores, and if possible the borrower's choice is facilitated by sound-proof music rooms or by listening tables. Records for the study of language and literature are acquired, including poetry and drama readings, and in some places record players are provided for lending. Realization is growing that the wide use of educational films by the military services has created for such materials a postwar demand which stimulates the imagination. Many libraries are already building collections of films and records and are making wide use of them with discussion groups. The American Library Association's Audio-Visual Committee has recognized the obligation to learn what the library's opportunities may be in this new field, and the Council of the Association has strongly endorsed the extension and improvement of film service through libraries.³ The use of microfilm for

³ See Annual Report of the American Library Association, Audio-Visual Committee, *A.L.A. Bulletin*, XXXVIII (October 1, 1944), 374-76. Action of the A.L.A. Council on this subject is noted in *A.L.A. Bulletin*, XL (September 15, 1946), P-28, and XLI (February, 1947), 58.



preservation of important records and documents, including files of newspapers and journals, is widespread. It promises to alleviate the storage problem in many large libraries.

Progressive libraries are already fully aware of their responsibilities and opportunities for supplying materials far different in form from the library's traditional book stock. In the postwar years, non-book materials will be increasingly recognized as an essential part of the collection, not only of the unusual library, but also of the average library.

In short, the public library must decide to what extent it will broaden the front of its operations. Shall it seek to reach a greatly increased number of users by materials and methods which supplement the printed book? The answer seems plain. For large numbers of Americans, print is not necessarily the best medium of communicating ideas. For all Americans, it is only one of a variety of methods of communication. The public library must explore thoroughly this new field and must adapt the best of the new materials to its own uses.

Obviously, this venture into a specialized field is not likely to be successful if made by small and relatively weak libraries. Once more, the need for a system of strong, large-unit libraries, able to acquire and service the new materials, is apparent.

PROBLEMS IN BUILDING THE COLLECTION

Basic in the development of the library's collection is an accurate determination of its objectives and its fields for emphasis. The major objectives of the American public library are usually stated as education, information, aesthetic appreciation, research, and recreation.⁴ The smaller the library, the greater the need for determining the field of emphasis; and the larger the library, the greater its probable success in meeting all these objectives. The most difficult decision for most libraries will be to determine how to draw the line between the objectives of education and recreation. The dividing line is never wholly clear, either for libraries or for the people who use libraries.⁵ In the postwar years most libraries will doubtless place major emphasis on education. More and more, purely

⁴ American Library Association. Committee on Post-War Planning, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-24.

⁵ Roden, "Standards of the Public Library Book Collection," *op. cit.*, p. 93.

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diversional reading will be de-emphasized and left to the commercial agencies. This decision must be made if the library is to perform an educational function worthy of the name.

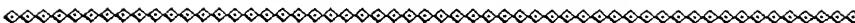
Intelligent formulation of objectives must be preceded by a determination of the needs of the individual community. A thorough survey of the area served is necessary to reveal salient facts about the population—its occupations, age distribution, reading interests and abilities, educational levels, and other characteristics. Complete information regarding other sources of reading matter available is necessary for the coordination of educational resources. Given this basic knowledge of community needs and resources, the librarian will be constantly alert to changes and developments and responsive to the varying needs of his community.

In meeting the community's needs, libraries will do more than respond to demand. They will seek not only to anticipate but also to stimulate interest and demand. Matters of vital importance in the contemporary social scene will be represented by up-to-date, readable materials. The library will seek to stimulate thought and discussion on controversial issues by provision of fair and representative publications on all sides of such questions. Criteria in the selection of debatable materials will include (1) value and interest to the community served, (2) sincerity and honesty of presentation, (3) factual correctness, and (4) value for historical or research purposes.

For the individual library's objectives, it may be unnecessary to build up a well-rounded collection. The interests of the community may call, not for balance, but rather for a reasonable degree of completeness in certain fields. The librarian will also be governed by other sources of reading and research materials in the region and the extent to which library cooperation makes them generally accessible. Interlibrary loan policies, reciprocal service agreements, and availability of microfilm facilities will be determining factors in this connection.

In building its collection, the library will recognize that, as a responsible public agency, it has an obligation to maintain standards of quality. If it claims educational objectives, it will recognize its position of leadership and its compulsion to furnish guidance and

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stimulation. Its policy must be active, not passive. From time to time, it may have an obligation to determine that certain demands by its constituency are not within its province to supply. In expenditure of public funds, it may frequently confront the necessity of choosing between satisfying transitory popular demands and more important social needs.

The good postwar library must also look to the quantities of its stock of books and materials. It may measure its total holdings by reasonably flexible standards.⁶ But these over-all measures will be useless unless the collections are up to date, alive, and responsive to popular needs. Tomorrow's library must recognize that hundreds of readers may wish to read the same book at almost the same time—or, at least, are interested in the same subjects as great numbers of their fellow citizens. Duplication of useful and worth-while books in generous quantities to meet the important current needs of the community promptly when interests are alive and urgent is therefore essential.⁷

Closely related is the library's task of public enlightenment. It is the responsibility of the public library to disseminate widely information on current issues and problems of special interest to the community, the nation, and the world. "Libraries should make it difficult for the people of the community to remain ignorant about the matters of great social importance."⁸ Programs organized for this purpose need not rely solely upon routine circulation and advisory services. The effective "Atomic Energy Institute" conducted in 1947 by the Enoch Pratt Free Library of Baltimore is an outstanding example. This Institute included a program of addresses by nationally known speakers, supplemented by carefully planned exhibits, displays of books and pamphlets in large quantities, and the distribution of thousands of book lists.⁹ While only a small num-

⁶ American Library Association, Committee on Post-War Planning, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-73.

⁷ C. H. Milam, "The Public Library of the Future," *School and Society*, XLVIII (October 15, 1938), 477-82; Roden, "Standards of the Public Library Book Collection," *op. cit.*, p. 94.

⁸ C. H. Milam, "Notes from the Corner Office," *A.L.A. Bulletin*, XLI (April, 1947), 99-100. See also C. H. Milam, "The Library and Today's Problems," *A.L.A. Bulletin*, XXXIII (December, 1939), 721-22.

⁹ Kate Coplan, "Baltimore's Atomic Energy Institute," *Library Journal*, LXXII (March 1, 1947), 367-71.

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ber of libraries may be able to undertake ambitious programs of this sort, the plan can be scaled down to meet the needs of smaller libraries. Moreover, this type of project lends itself to extensive duplication if sponsored by the American Library Association or by groups of libraries.

The postwar public library must really come to grips with the problem of obsolescence. The average public library, certainly, has no responsibility for retaining on its shelves large numbers of volumes which are, for its purposes, at least, outdated and outmoded. The library's book stock, in order to maintain vitality and maximum usefulness, must be constantly weeded. Surplus volumes will go to regional storage reservoirs, where the final sifting process will take place, and where all titles retained will be available for the use of any library in the region. The library administrator must include in his budget liberal amounts for new books and for replacement of old ones lost or worn out in service.

Finally, the library must get its books read, its materials used. In addition to the more usual publicity devices, regional radio book talks may serve to call attention of many potential users to the resources of all the libraries in a large cooperating group. Within the library, specialists in the various types of library materials will provide expert guidance for the library user. Experiments should also be made with new types of arrangement of library materials. Instead of the traditional arrangement of books by classification numbers, many libraries may prefer to display parts of their collections by broad groupings based on reader interest—books for the home, for the citizen, for the mechanic or artisan, and for other groups.¹⁰

PRODUCTION OF NEEDED MATERIALS

The postwar public library will also become an active agency in influencing the production of materials suited to its special needs. As the library recognizes more generally its responsibilities in the field of adult education, its administrators will become increasingly aware of the lack of materials appropriate for many aspects of the program. There is now a dearth of books and pamphlets suited to

¹⁰ See pp. 7-8.

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the needs of the adult whose experiences are mature but whose educational background and reading ability are at a low level. Difficulties of comprehension discourage ambition, and materials on an appropriate reading level are usually written for the immature. Furthermore, there is need for study of the types of books on various topics needed to make the adult education service to readers more effective. "At present, libraries are dependent largely on the output of publishers and authors whose criteria for needed publications do not necessarily match those for an informal education service to adults. Such a service perhaps needs some preliminary research on diagnosing the needs of readers and on types of reader interest. Thorough and effective adult education service through reading is definitely dependent on achieving a suitable supply of reading materials, prepared . . . with the specific purposes of a library adult education program in mind."¹¹

Close cooperation with publishers, writers, and others concerned with production of educational materials is therefore needed to secure new materials in poorly covered fields and suited to various reading levels. The list of needs also includes educational media for those unaccustomed to the use of print. Libraries should obviously greatly increase their use of educational films, recordings, and graphic means of presentation. Study will be needed to determine types of media best suited to various purposes, subjects best adapted to such means of instruction, and important gaps in subject matter covered. The librarian's task, in other words, goes beyond securing and using available materials and includes influencing the actual production of new and experimental materials.

SUMMARY

The collection of the postwar American public library, although still based primarily on print in all its forms, will be materially different in form and content from the collection of the present-day library. Not all of the possible changes can be clearly foreseen, but some of the more likely ones may be summarized as follows.

The book stock of the large-unit library will be more extensive

¹¹ John Chancellor, "Tentative Statement on Adult Education Standards for Libraries, Prepared for the A.L.A. Post-War Planning Committee" (March, 1942). Mimeo graphed.

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because it will contain more titles than the group of small, independent libraries it replaces. Its bibliographic spread will be greater, especially in nonfiction. More effective systems of cooperation between libraries will also tend to increase the number of titles readily available to serious readers everywhere.

At the same time, the public library of tomorrow will emphasize large-scale duplication of important books, so that many persons may be reading the same title at approximately the same time. Multiple copies of standard books and pamphlets in paper-bound editions will be widely distributed by sale or exchange, without the necessity of formal charging records.

Perhaps the most striking change in postwar library content will be the greatly increased emphasis on nonbook materials. Examples are: pictorial and graphic materials of many kinds; recordings of music, poetry, plays, and speeches; educational films; microfilms of newspapers, official records, and books not readily available in print. Such materials will be common in public libraries generally.

Whatever its form, the postwar library must conscientiously maintain the quality of its collection. It should strongly emphasize its educational objective and should correspondingly de-emphasize the purely diversional aspects of its recreational objective.

In postwar years, the library will be forced to deal drastically with its obsolescent books and materials. These must be discarded or sent to regional storage reservoirs for final sifting.

Finally, the public library will actively influence the publication of new types of books and pamphlets useful in its program of adult education. Specially needed are books of mature content for adults of limited reading abilities.

*Personnel of the Postwar Public Library*¹

BOOKS alone do not make a library. The success of the postwar public library depends in large measure upon the qualifications of the postwar librarian. For a library which aims to take its full part in the creation of an intelligent and informed populace, it is not enough to supply books and other materials in sufficient and accessible quantities, well selected for each population group. Equally essential is a library staff fully qualified to fit books and materials to specific reader needs and to create and foster a desire for reading and information.

The staffing of the system of public libraries proposed in preceding chapters will necessitate major changes in the numbers and qualifications of library personnel. The discussion of personnel in this chapter, however, will be limited to a few significant points essential in the development of a plan for postwar library service.

By way of introduction, it may be noted that the creation of the system of large public library units described in Chapter III of this report will materially affect the character of library personnel. The organization of larger units will tend to concentrate library administration in fewer and stronger hands. Essential in the new system, therefore, will be the development of able chief administrators and middle administrators. Likewise, the technical processes of acquisi-

¹ For more extended treatment of personnel administration in public libraries, see the following:

C. W. Herbert, *Personnel Administration in Public Libraries* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1939); Lowell Martin, ed., *Personnel Administration in Libraries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946); E. W. and John McDiarmid, *The Administration of the American Public Library* (Chicago: American Library Association and University of Illinois Press, 1943), pp. 168-201; American Library Association. Committee on Post-War Standards, *Post-War Standards for Public Libraries* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1943), pp. 75-82.



tion and preparation of books and materials will be more and more concentrated in the hands of specialists skilled in these functions. This, in turn, will permit greater emphasis on improved methods of library service. Staff specialists in adult education, in the techniques and problems of reading, in reading guidance, and in service to children and young people will be attached to the larger units. Skilled service by the expert will be as generally available as library service itself. The functioning of the larger service unit, furthermore, will facilitate the distinction between professional and clerical duties, so difficult to achieve in small libraries. Many subprofessional or clerical activities may be effectively concentrated at headquarters or in regional or other large branches. In short, the larger unit will permit the specialization in staff functions which is the foundation of good library administration.

ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARIAN

The kind of public library service described in Chapter I can be attained only by personnel of many and varied qualifications. The public librarian of the future must have a vision of the library's place in society and an awareness of its relationship to other libraries and other social institutions. He must be qualified, both in understanding and in personality, to integrate the library with other community activities. He must be comparable in intellectual caliber, education, and personal qualifications with other social and educational leaders. His knowledge of the life of the community and his active participation in it will enable him to make the library's services widely known to its people.

The increasing volume and complexity of print and other tools of learning require expert knowledge and skill in making these resources known. Not only must the librarian have a thorough knowledge of local resources, but he must also know those accessible elsewhere in the region, the state, or the nation.²

The complexities of our social structure, as well as of recorded knowledge, are making increased demands for specialization. The librarian, therefore, must not only have a broad intellectual equipment but also specialized knowledge in chosen fields.

² See Chapter VI, "Coordination of Library Service."

Leadership is a basic qualification of the librarian. Yet he has often been reluctant to accept this role. Too often he has been concerned with techniques and processes, too little concerned with people themselves, or with community programs. His bookish qualities have tended to accentuate the monastic instinct, and he has found the cloistered desk more attractive than the forum. The combination of book knowledge and of active community participation is not impossible, as many library leaders have demonstrated. The role calls for imagination, vision, and initiative, for fearlessness and self-confidence, and for the outgiving personality rather than the constitutional recluse. The librarian who will insure for his institution the place which it must occupy will start with people rather than with books. He will seek understanding of men and sympathy with the individual's needs and abilities. His interest in people will not be an academic concept, but the result of an inner warmth which makes itself felt.

Although personal qualifications have been considered first, the educational qualifications of the librarian are no less important. For professional library personnel, a broad academic foundation is essential. The public librarian who expects to serve as community leader should have no less than four years of general college or university education. In view of his responsibilities, advanced study is as important for him as for the teacher or for the college or university librarian. His interests must be wide, and his knowledge of books should qualify him as *the* book expert of his community. He will find his greatest satisfaction and usefulness if he seeks expertness in one or more major subjects. Finally, his academic training should inculcate in him precision of thought and an analytic, objective attitude, very necessary in skillful servicing of books.

The librarian also needs at least a year of professional education, beyond college, designed to give him a broad knowledge of professional resources and developments on a national scale, a well-balanced bibliographic equipment, and proficiency in the necessary techniques and skills. His professional education should also give him an understanding of varying reading abilities, habits, and interests of people, and skills in applying print and audio-visual materials to diverse needs of groups and individuals. An increasing number of public

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librarians will find it desirable to undertake advanced professional study in addition to the basic program of one year. Library authorities should be generous in granting leaves of absence to able staff members for this purpose.

During his professional preparation, the librarian will be helped to find the field of work for which he is best adapted and to prepare himself specifically for his choice. He may choose to specialize in work with certain groups (e.g., in the fields of business, labor, public administration, religion, or social service) or special age levels (e.g., adolescents or children). He may prefer to specialize in some subject field, such as history or biological science, or in use of special types of materials, such as educational films and other media of audio-visual instruction. Or, the area of general library administration or of personnel administration may appeal to him most.

For each of these areas of specialization, certain personal qualifications and aptitudes will be necessary. For executives, particularly in the large library, vision, imagination, and organizing and managerial ability are essential. The prospective extension librarian, looking toward service in county or regional libraries or in state library agencies, must understand the organization of rural communities and must know the special problems involved in providing rural areas with adequate library service. The branch librarian in a city or county library system is responsible for the first line of service to his community and must know intimately its needs and its activities. The librarian preparing for work with children needs not only ability to get along with the child, but also a knowledge of child psychology and modern educational procedures, as well as an acquaintance with an entire field of literature not usually familiar to the adult. Whatever the goal of the prospective librarian, his objective while in training will be to acquire those skills which are essential in meeting the needs of the individual with appropriate printed materials. He will gain comprehension of that function of librarians stated by Pearl Buck: "They cannot consider their work done until they have books in the hands of readers and until they have the contents of those books in the minds and thinking of citizens."³

⁸ Pearl S. Buck, "Not Ready for Victory," *A.L.A. Bulletin*, XXXVII (February, 1943), 35-36.

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The demand for personnel of the kinds just described can be met only by the further development of public librarianship as a career service steadily advancing in personal satisfactions, in service rendered, and in reasonable rewards for work well done. Many librarians will find satisfying careers within a single library. But often opportunities for advancement in one library will be too few, types of work too specialized, and salary scales too limited. Great freedom of transfer from library to library should therefore be encouraged. As classification and pay plans are perfected, it may be possible to standardize job descriptions and even salaries for typical positions in many libraries so that the successive steps in the career ladder may be more readily distinguished.

Two parallel channels of promotion should be clearly recognized in the careers of public librarians. One is the administrative channel, in which the librarian advances from a position as an individual worker to a minor administrative post and then successively to more and more important administrative positions. But this obvious type of administrative advancement is not well adapted to the capabilities and interests of many able librarians. Another career channel of professional advancement as a subject or functional specialist must also be kept open. The expert in bibliography or cataloging, the specialist in science, in fine arts, or in other subjects, the reading specialist, the children's librarian—these and other specialists should be enabled to advance in rank and salary without assuming important administrative responsibilities. The development of these two parallel career ladders will bring many librarians to satisfying positions which will permit the best use of their special qualifications.

The staffing of postwar public libraries will require the recruiting, first of all, of a backlog of professional personnel to perform the fundamental and traditional functions of public libraries: administrators, catalogers, reference librarians, circulation librarians, and librarians for work with children and young people. There will also be greatly increased need for personnel with other special qualifications, trained and qualified to meet changing conditions. Coordination of existing resources and development of large regional service areas will call for administrators of unusual imagination, tact, and organizing ability. The demand for specialists in subject fields will

also increase. The rapidly emerging employment of audio-visual materials as educational media indicates a demand for librarians prepared to use such materials, skilled in discussion techniques and in linking reading materials to the more ephemeral impression left by the film.

If the public library is to aid adult citizens to become informed thinkers on personal and social problems, its staff must include librarians qualified to suggest books for specific reader needs and to create among nonreaders a desire for reading and information. This calls for reading-aid specialists who are not only thoroughly acquainted with the world of books but skilled in interviewing, guidance techniques, and in interpreting reading difficulties. Many libraries will need such reading specialists, some serving as consultants to the individual reader within the library, others acting as extramural group workers. They will make library resources known to religious, labor, youth, civic, and other groups and will coordinate library service with the various educational programs in the community. The ultimate aim of such group work will be the fusing of the content of books with the thinking of the individual citizen.

Large increases in the personnel of American public libraries will be required in the immediate postwar years. One careful survey estimates that 3,500 additional professional librarians will be needed by 1950, thus increasing present staffs to more than 15,000 professionals.⁴ If public library service of reasonably high standard were extended to all the 140 million people of the United States, the total personnel requirements of American public libraries would approximate 60,000 full-time staff members—professional and nonprofessional.⁵ These should be divided into two approximately equal groups, one composed of professional librarians and the other of nonprofessional assistants. Present ratios in public libraries tend to exceed 50 per cent for professionals, but as library units are enlarged

⁴ "Post-War Library Personnel: a Report from the American Library Association on Post-War Educational Opportunities for Service Personnel." January 29, 1944. Mimeo-graphed.

⁵ This estimate is based on the standard for "man-hours" of public service proposed in American Library Association. Committee on Post-War Standards, *Post-War Standards for Public Libraries*, *op. cit.*, p. 32, and on a ratio of approximately one full-time library staff member per 2,400 population served, derived from data in "Public Library Statistics," *A.L.A. Bulletin*, XXXVIII (April, 1944), 154-67.

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and work programs revised, it may be expected that the ratio between professionals and nonprofessionals will gradually strike a rough balance.

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

Much of the success of the library staff member on the job in his library depends upon skillful personnel administration—"the art of giving shape to human powers."⁶ Alert governing authorities realize that the social objectives of the library cannot be attained until its functions are so organized and managed as to provide intellectual satisfaction, continued stimulation, security, and opportunity for maximum growth and individual contribution for each staff member. The staff of the library must be so organized that each member can contribute to the group effort his highest abilities and skills.

Selection of personnel must be carefully controlled in all libraries and at all levels in the library career service. Each state should have an adequate certification law, designed to enforce basic minimum qualifications for the principal personnel grades. Some local authorities will supplement the state's certification requirements by civil service regulations, others by their own merit systems. Often several adjacent jurisdictions may conduct cooperative examinations for the selection of library personnel in comparable grades. In all systems of control, the selection of personnel should be governed solely by fitness for the given position and restricted in no way by residence requirements or by racial or religious factors.

Personnel policies should be carefully codified in all public libraries, and responsibility for personnel administration clearly fixed. Public libraries with staffs of 150 or more should have full-time personnel officers; in smaller libraries, the chief librarian himself should usually supervise this function.

The position classification plan is the essential tool which objectively fixes requirements and describes duties for each position and which locates each position in the proper and logical place in the organizational framework. The professional librarian will make his contribution in professional activities, the clerical or subprofessional assistant, trained for service in nonprofessional activities, will release

⁶ J. D. Kingsley, "Personnel: the Key to Progress," in Lowell Martin, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 2.

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the librarian for the type of work for which he has been specially prepared. Furthermore, careful study in the individual library will determine the reasonable work load for each member of the staff, so that each department and activity may be adequately staffed.

The library should be so administered as to give each staff member opportunity for democratic self-expression and development. Provision should be made for free participation in planning and experimentation. Both for institutional and individual growth, in-service training of appropriate types should be provided. Opportunity for advancement to higher rank should be insured by fair and clearly understood promotion policies. Cooperation between libraries can be greatly facilitated by occasional exchange of personnel.

Compensation of the public librarian should be adequate, first, in salary on the job and, second, in pension after retirement. To secure recruits of high caliber for the library profession, salaries in the lower brackets and in small libraries must be materially improved. Adequate salary scales for each position, comparable with those offered other professional groups in the community and responsive to the changing cost of living, are a prime necessity. Supplementing decent living standards, library authorities will also look to adequate welfare provisions, such as group insurance, standard vacation and sick leave allowances, leaves of absence for study, and retirement plans. Study should be given to plans for interchangeable pensions, so that transfer of personnel between libraries may be facilitated. At the present time, libraries in which excellent retirement systems are in effect too often find themselves faced with a serious problem of stagnation.

SUMMARY: ELEMENTS IN A NATIONAL PERSONNEL SYSTEM

Essential for a postwar library program is a new concept of librarianship. The librarian of the past is usually pictured in the role of custodian or watchdog. He has fortunately progressed beyond that stage in his development and has become the dispenser of books, often with his eye fixed nervously on circulation figures. But the full potential of the public library in the American educational scene will not be realized until its objectives and activities are concerned with quality rather than quantity. Until the library has reoriented itself toward a more positive educational role, it will not become the

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“university of the people” it has claimed to be. This will necessitate sufficient funds to attract recruits of unusual ability and to provide highly qualified personnel equipped to serve as leaders and guides in our complex society. The essential elements in a national plan for adequate public library personnel are these:

1. For the education of public librarians, there must be a group of strong library schools capable of supplying professional librarians in numbers sufficient to fill both current vacancies and also the large arrearages in personnel which developed during the war period. The efficiency of the schools should be assured by a national accreditation plan. The accrediting authority—probably the American Library Association’s Board of Education for Librarianship—should be strong enough to enforce high standards in the programs of the schools.⁷
2. State laws for the certification of librarians, supplemented by local personnel or civil service systems, are necessary to safeguard entrance into the library profession and advancement within it.
3. When public library service of good quality is provided for all the people of the United States, a working force of some 60,000 persons will be required to man the public libraries of the nation. About half of these will be professional librarians and the remainder nonprofessional assistants.
4. Public librarianship should be recognized as a distinct career service. It should provide two parallel channels of advancement, the first in administrative rank and the second in rank as a subject or functional specialist.
5. Enlightened personnel administration is needed within each library. The best methods and devices used in public service generally should be employed.
6. Salary schedules should be attractive to personnel of high quality in all grades of library service. Salaries should be supplemented by pension and welfare systems insuring financial security for old age or illness.

⁷ J. P. Danton, *Education for Librarianship* (New York: School of Library Service, Columbia University, 1946), pp. 28-30.

The Public Library Building Program

THE physical plant of the library network of the future must be adequate. Gradually, the national plan for public library service will take shape in library buildings. To commit the plan to steel and concrete involves making decisions of far-reaching importance. Errors in judgment regarding the location of library buildings, their layout, and their book capacity are often impossible to correct; at best, necessary alterations are difficult and costly.

This chapter is not an extended discussion of public library building problems. It will consider only certain aspects of library building which are closely related to the national library plan.

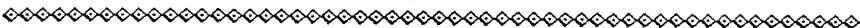
Responsibility for the preparation of detailed inventories of public library building needs rests primarily upon the state library agencies and the larger local library systems. They should have ready careful estimates of the future building requirements of their states, counties, or cities. State maps of effective larger units may disclose the need for regional headquarters libraries in place of existing small-town libraries, or for branch buildings in localities now without library service. Planning for library buildings should be related to over-all postwar plans for state and local areas and should be integrated with local, state, and federal public works programs.

COST OF A NATIONAL LIBRARY BUILDING PROGRAM

The existence of a very serious arrearage in public library buildings has already been noted in Chapter II of this report, where it was estimated that the physical plant of the present library system was only about 50 per cent adequate.¹ The public library building needs of the nation may be classified in the following major categories:

¹ See pp. 28-29.

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1. New buildings are needed for the very extensive areas populated by the 35 million people now entirely without public library service. These areas are largely rural and are often sparsely populated. Service to the people of such regions will require many headquarters buildings and large numbers of small library buildings, some of which may be combined with community centers or with schools.

2. A large number of obsolete library buildings, in cities large and small, should be replaced by modern, functional structures. Many of these buildings were erected before the first World War and are now well over thirty years old.

3. Even in cities and counties with established library systems, many additional branch library buildings are needed. In New York City, for example, a recent survey shows that capital outlays amounting to about \$10 million are needed for new branch sites and buildings, with nearly \$4 million more required for the initial book stocks of these branches.²

4. Finally, there remains the great task of remodeling, modernization, and enlargement of American public library buildings. Hundreds of existing libraries are antiquated, outgrown, and ill adapted to modern needs. In view of the high average age of public library buildings in the country, the financial requirements of this program of renovation and enlargement may approach rather closely the capital sums needed for new buildings.

Only a complete nation-wide inventory could determine accurately the amounts actually required under each of the above classes of building needs. The best available estimates of the capital outlays required to bring the public library building plant of the nation up to standard fix the total need at approximately \$500 million.³ This figure is based on accepted standards of per capita expenditures re-

² New York City Planning Commission, *Program for the Public Libraries of New York City*. Prepared under the direction of Lawrence M. Orton by Alfred Morton Githens and Ralph Munn, Consultants (New York: City Planning Commission, 1945), pp. 12-16.

³ United States National Resources Planning Board, *National Resources Development Report for 1943. Part I: Post-War Plan and Program* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1943), p. 73. Other estimates made by Paul Howard, National Relations Office, American Library Association, March 18, 1946, and by Carl H. Milam, Executive Secretary, American Library Association, October 5, 1944.

quired for central and branch libraries in cities of varying size.⁴ It is also based on estimates received from a large sample of public libraries which made reports on their building needs. Building costs have risen materially since these calculations were made, and the estimated amount required for public library buildings today may be fixed at \$500 million or more.

TYPES OF PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDINGS

The large-unit library, depicted in these pages as the essential element in a nation-wide plan for effective library service, will require several different types of library buildings, each designed to fill certain definite needs. It is pertinent to recall here that the national library plan proposes a total of approximately 1,200 library administrative units,⁵ each with an appropriate number of branches as outlets for the distribution of library materials and service. The most important types are described briefly in the paragraphs which follow.

THE HEADQUARTERS BUILDING.—The focal point of each library unit should be a modern, functional headquarters or central building, planned for at least twenty years of expansion and community growth. In sections of the country where library service is introduced for the first time, strategic locations must be chosen for the headquarters building, and building plans must envisage large new areas of service. For some county library headquarters a location in a modern county government building, planned for library occupancy, may be a proper solution of the building problem. But in most situations, both urban and county or regional library service may be provided most economically by developing a central building which will extend modern library service both to the city and to the region from a common center.

THE REGIONAL BRANCH.—In the large-unit pattern, the regional branch with its extensive book collections will become an agency of strategic importance in many situations. In large cities the regional

⁴ American Library Association. Committee on Post-War Planning, *Post-War Standards for Public Libraries* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1943), p. 65; J. L. Wheeler and A. M. Githens, *The American Public Library Building* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), pp. 38-44.

⁵ See pp. 49-51.

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branch may function primarily as a service center for a group of smaller community branches in its region, but it may also function as an administrative center for the same group of branches. Pioneered by Chicago, with its three important regional branches,⁶ the regional branch is growing in favor. New York's branch plan provides for no less than eleven regional branches in the city's five boroughs.⁷ Likewise, the regional branch may also become an important cog in the distributing machine of the large county or multicounty library. An excellent example is Los Angeles County's regional branch at Lancaster for the Antelope Valley region.⁸

THE COMMUNITY BRANCH BUILDING.—In the larger municipal libraries and in county and regional libraries, the community branch will bring library service directly to the people at strategic points. Since branch buildings tend to follow more or less standardized patterns in many library systems, the branch building plan deserves unusually careful study. The branch library should not be a monumental structure, and it must always be easily accessible, attractive in appearance, and efficient in interior arrangement.⁹ When population patterns are reasonably well matured, branch buildings will usually be permanent structures, with book collections ranging from 10,000 to 40,000 or more volumes. In less populous areas, smaller branches may prove adequate. In localities where population is shifting or where trends are uncertain, rented quarters may be preferable to permanent investment in buildings. Experimentation already under way with small prefabricated buildings may point to newer, more flexible types of small branch units especially adapted to use in county and regional libraries.¹⁰

LIBRARY BRANCHES IN COMMUNITY CENTERS AND SCHOOLS.—Under favorable conditions, branch libraries may sometimes be housed in buildings designed primarily for other functions, such as community centers, schools, or grange buildings. If such branches are planned

⁶ C. B. Joeckel and Leon Carnovsky, *A Metropolitan Library in Action: A Survey of the Chicago Public Library* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), pp. 256-58.

⁷ New York City Planning Commission, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5, 29-30.

⁸ H. E. Vogleson, "A Regional Branch Library," *Library Journal*, LX (May 15, 1935), 429-30.

⁹ J. L. Wheeler and A. M. Githens, *op. cit.*, pp. 375-83.

¹⁰ "Tennessee Library Council and TVA Specialists Develop a Coordinated Group of Small Libraries," *Architectural Forum*, LXXXIV (January, 1946), 118-21.

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for service both to adults and children, several important specifications must be made: a central and accessible location; library quarters near the entrance or with a separate entrance; adequate space for readers and collection; and convenient hours of opening. These combined service agencies make it possible to extend library service into many small communities. They take advantage of the common interests of users of the whole group of agencies, and they are obviously economical in construction cost and operation.

BOOKMOBILES.—As the highway system of the country is extended and automotive equipment perfected, the use of the bookmobile or trailer will doubtless continue to increase. Service of this type is clearly indicated, not only in sparsely populated areas, but also in many cities and metropolitan areas.

REGIONAL RESERVOIR LIBRARIES.—Finally, to complete the public library building program, there is need for a chain of storage or reservoir libraries to house the surplus or little-used books of public and other types of libraries. These buildings should be warehouses designed for the economical storage of large quantities of books no longer in active demand. The building of these reservoirs would permit libraries to clear their shelves of outmoded and obsolescent materials. The working efficiency of many libraries would be materially increased by this weeding process, but the volumes withdrawn from the various libraries would still be available in case of need. Funds for the reservoir libraries might be secured through federal and state public works programs, aided by contributions from participating libraries.

ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES IN PLANNING LIBRARY BUILDINGS

In planning the various types of public library buildings for effective community use, certain principles should be recognized as basically important. Some of these principles essential in a national plan for library service may be summarized as follows:

1. **THE LIBRARY BUILDING SHOULD BE EASILY ACCESSIBLE TO ITS POTENTIAL CLIENTELE.**—Location is all-important if the public library is to achieve its maximum usefulness. If a book can be picked up along with the day's groceries, it is likely to go into the shopping bag with the bread and butter. But if it is to be had only by climbing

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a monumental flight of steps, or by walking three blocks farther to the handsome residence converted into a library, or even by seeking the library in the center of the little green park, the book may remain unused on the library shelf.

2. THE LIBRARY BUILDING SHOULD BE FUNCTIONAL.—Fortunately, this principle is now generally accepted. The emerging concept of the public library building of today is quite different from that of yesterday. The modern public library is not a monumental show-piece but a working instrument designed to serve readers and to house its collection conveniently and efficiently.

3. STANDARD TYPES OF LIBRARY BUILDINGS SHOULD BE DEVELOPED.—All public library buildings, of course, should not be alike. But several different types of buildings are closely similar in function, wherever they may be located. Special study should therefore be given to the development of building types which may be useful in many typical situations. New York City, for example, is planning a special type of large city branch adapted to the needs of a great metropolitan area. The county library branch is another type of building which will be widely used. The small-town library, which may serve as an independent library or perhaps later as a branch of a large-unit library, is another. Architectural competitions for the more important types of buildings, and for buildings suitable to different climates, might assist in developing standard plans usable in many different places.

4. MANY PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDINGS SHOULD BE ADAPTABLE FOR EXPANDED SERVICE IN COUNTY OR REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEMS.—As the large-unit library plan develops, many now-independent public libraries will join or affiliate with county or regional libraries. Sometimes these libraries will serve as the headquarters for county libraries, sometimes as regional or community branches. This participation in a pattern of extended service will affect library building requirements in two ways. First, many persons outside the limits of the city or town in which the library is located will use the building. Second, the building should include necessary space for the headquarters of present or future extension activities. In short, when new library buildings in many communities are erected or old ones enlarged, adequate provision should be made for the possibility of

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extended service in the future as part of a county or regional library unit.

5. THE PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING OF THE FUTURE SHOULD BE PLANNED AND EQUIPPED AS A MODERN EDUCATIONAL CENTER.—As has been said many times in this report, the postwar public library will emphasize its functions as an educational agency. This fact has important implications for the library building. It must provide rooms for meetings and conferences of organizations and discussion groups of many kinds. It will need installations of audio-visual facilities, projection rooms where films may be shown, and soundproof listening rooms where recordings may be heard. Space for these educational and group activities should be provided in all new buildings and in the enlargement of old ones.

CONCLUSION

If the national library plan is to approach reality, the library building program must be projected well into the future. This is difficult because the proposed pattern of library service is only partially complete. Yet this difficulty is in part offset by prospective postwar developments in building materials, lighting, and equipment, and also by a new spirit in architecture, based on a definite purpose to fit the library building to the essential functions it performs.

Even a short-range view of postwar public library building needs shows them to be very great: for new buildings for the 35 million persons living in areas without public libraries; for additional branches in many established municipal and large-unit libraries; for replacement, modernization, and enlargement of hundreds of obsolescent structures. Provisional estimates indicate that these varied building needs will require a capital outlay of not less than \$500 million.

The public library building of the future must be designed to fulfill a clearly understood purpose. The standard types of buildings—central library and system headquarters, regional and community branches in cities and counties, and library agencies in community centers and schools—must all be studied and perfected as units in a planned system of library service. The library building must be

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accessible to readers and attractive to them. As a prospective unit in a national plan of library service, it must be adaptable, when necessary, to extended service beyond the boundaries of its immediate community. It should be planned and equipped to serve as a modern community intelligence center.

*The Citizen and the Public Library*¹

IF LIBRARY planning is to succeed, at any level of government, active citizen support is essential. The American public library has developed as an expression of American democracy. It can reach its full usefulness only as it serves the entire nation through local community enterprises, and only as large numbers of citizens share in its activities and its development. Such participation has always been free and voluntary, a striking demonstration of democracy at work.

In every community, there exists a dual relationship between the citizen and his library. It can be stated in terms of mutual obligations of the library to the citizen and of the citizen to the library. The citizen is at once the benefactor and the beneficiary of the public library.

CITIZEN USE OF THE LIBRARY

The public library exists for the citizen. Its service is primarily to the individual, seeking to anticipate his needs and to fit functions and materials to those needs. The library, ideally conceived, aims to aid each individual in the full development of his intellectual, social, and cultural capacities. Chapter I has shown the public library at its best. We have seen the citizen as he turns to his library for help in business, recreation, study, and in all the multiple problems of home and community life. He comes for specific information, for guidance in reading, and for aid in research.

The library serves also as a community center to which the citizen turns as he seeks expression of his interests and desires through group affiliation. More and more, the library seeks to serve the individual through the groups to which he belongs. Existing groups use library

¹The assistance of Paul Howard in drafting this chapter is gratefully acknowledged.

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meeting rooms for lectures, forums, club and committee meetings, and group-sponsored activities of many kinds. The library, in turn, frequently is instrumental in organizing groups for reading and discussion of books or for the consideration of important social issues. It brings together groups of children for story hours and of young people for film forum discussions or perhaps for poetry evenings. It organizes listening groups for symphony programs or for self-expression on topics discussed in the Town Meeting of the Air. Clubs and other organizations turn to the library for aid in planning and conducting their annual programs.

The librarian's aim is to correlate the library with the activities of all groups having social or cultural objectives. He establishes contact with racial or nationality groups, with organizations of parents, teachers, business, and labor. He affiliates himself through personal membership with civic, welfare, and art groups. Some large libraries have field representatives who devote most of their time to work with special groups, such as civic and labor organizations, making library resources known and assisting in the development of educational programs.

Among the many motives which lead the citizens of a community to establish and operate a library, there is one basic, clear-cut purpose—to provide the entire community with well-organized, easily accessible information about the problems which confront the community, and to provide recreational and cultural materials of high aesthetic and moral value. It is the obligation of the library to supply all the services necessary to achieve this purpose: to establish a library system of branches, stations, deposit collections, and bookmobile services; to organize materials by classifying, cataloging, shelving, and staffing, so that they will be readily available on demand and so that all of the major informational needs of the community will be met with a minimum of delay and red tape.

CITIZEN AID TO THE LIBRARY

The alert citizen, in turn, realizes that he has certain obligations to the library, whether it be purely a matter of self-interest or the broader motive of providing opportunities for the children and adults of the community. He realizes that social institutions do not

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grow in a vacuum and that libraries cannot be taken for granted. He must provide financial support and physical facilities sufficient to enable the library to do a good job.

This obligation rests particularly upon the actual users of the library. They are a select body which receives the benefit from the whole community's effort. They know the facts about library service better than any other group. They benefit most from good library service and are most harmed by poor service. For this reason, they have an obligation to support the library program if it is one they approve, and an obligation to change it if they do not approve. This can be done as individuals—by talking with library officials and members of the library board, and staff members, by letters to the papers, by individual discussion—all evidence of an active, intelligent interest in community affairs.

Citizen interest is illustrated most strikingly, perhaps, by some 35,000 members of library boards who serve without compensation as trustees of the 7,500 public libraries in the United States. These trustees are usually appointive officers, chosen for their sense of civic responsibility. They contribute time for board meetings, at which they seek an understanding of the problems of the library and, in cooperation with the librarian, formulate its policies. They represent the library to their communities, many of them actively and with informed interest. Theirs is the obligation of studying the library's needs and securing adequate funds for its operation. Many of them spend unceasing energy interpreting the library to other citizens and contributing toward an informed public opinion. Their interest often extends beyond the confines of their own communities, and they lend active support to state and national library programs. In many states, and on a national level, library trustees have organized associations to work for the general betterment of libraries and for exchange of ideas and experience.

Citizen interest is, however, by no means confined to trustees. Individually and through organized groups it has expressed itself through the years in ways too numerous to catalog. The individual citizen, be he newspaper editor, a voice in the contributors' column, a self-appointed library ambassador, or an encouraging library patron, can do much to further understanding of the library and to

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build good will. The merchant allows the library to use his store windows for displays and mentions library books in the house organ of his business. The teacher instructs her pupils in the use of the library and instills in them a love of good reading. The minister calls the attention of his congregation to the library's books on religious topics. The labor leader refers the members of his union to the library for books on labor problems. The lawyer suggests to his clients that valuable book collections may be willed to the library. Sooner or later most citizens will find opportunities to make the library better known in their communities.

Organized support of libraries is no new thing in the American scene. Many libraries had their beginning through the activities and energy of some women's club. In many communities and states, groups of men and women, organized primarily for other purposes, have been instrumental in the passage of special library tax levies or increased appropriations, bond issues for new buildings, or better library legislation. The list of such organizations is a long one. It includes service clubs, parent-teacher associations, university women, business and professional women, voters' leagues, labor unions, farm bureaus, granges, youth organizations, and many more. Librarians and trustees are frequently identified with one or more of these groups as working members. Greatly increased cooperation should be fostered and stimulated. These groups are well organized and their influence is far-reaching. In general, their common aim is civic betterment. Their contribution to the advancement of libraries can be very great.

Finally, there are the "Friends of the Library" groups, organized to become acquainted with the services of libraries and to help interpret their program to the community. Such groups realize that librarians and trustees alone cannot perform the common task of making the library a real educational force. "Friends of the Library" are strong and going concerns in many communities. They have worked to secure building funds, to stimulate gifts (both of money and books), to awaken consciousness of the library's needs, to provide special collections and special equipment (such as bookmobiles), and to sponsor lecture series under library auspices. In one case, at least, they sponsored a survey of library resources and needs and appointed

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committees to work on different library problems under the direction of a new librarian.

In some instances, "Friends of the Library" groups, variously named, operate on a state-wide basis. Their concern is usually with better legislation, the development of a strong state library agency, and the extension of complete library service throughout the state. One such group sponsored and successfully supported a program that culminated in the establishment of a county library.

Many more such organizations are needed. They can stimulate interest and spread information through their membership. They can provide active leadership to work in cooperation with state library associations and state library agencies. They can work with state legislatures to secure state aid and better library laws. And they can carry conviction to Congress of the need for federal aid for nation-wide library development.

These "Friends of the Library" organizations will not be "pressure groups" in the accepted sense of the term. Their function will not always be to support a larger library budget; sometimes it will be to see that a library earns its appropriation. They will seek to reinforce the claims of public libraries for reasonable public support—not in the interests of a few, but for the benefit of all the people.

CONCLUSION

The major thesis of this chapter is that the relationship between the citizen and his public library is best described as a mutual obligation between two parties to a jointly useful contract. The library exists to serve the citizen as an individual or as a member of many different groups. The citizen, on his part, has it in his power to aid the library in many ways as an individual, as a library trustee, or as a member of the "Friends of the Library" or other appropriate organizations.

From this participation in library affairs, the citizen will derive many satisfactions. To be intimately connected with this peculiarly American institution, to watch its growth in service and influence, to aid it in bringing aesthetic satisfactions, social understanding, and economic competence to many individuals—these are public services which bring their own rewards.

Fields of Research and Investigation

AT MANY points in preceding chapters, the need for extended research and investigation in the whole public library field has been apparent. Research is an indispensable foundation for library planning and for the development of library services. It identifies needs and discovers methods of meeting them. It evaluates the results achieved by library programs. Library objectives, the framework of organization, techniques, service procedures—in determining all of these, research is useful and essential.¹

The word "research" is used broadly throughout this chapter. It includes fact-finding in all forms and also such related activities as library surveys and demonstrations. Emphasis is naturally placed on applied research which may be directly useful in the solution of library problems, but the importance of basic research which may have little immediate practical application is fully recognized. The major purpose of the chapter is to identify important areas of research and to suggest special research projects by way of illustration. No attempt is made to consider detailed methods of investigation. And it is obviously possible to select for consideration only a limited number of topics.

CENTERS FOR RESEARCH

Before attention is directed to specific fields of research, it is pertinent to raise the question: Where should research be done? The first important group of centers for research includes the various agencies of the federal, state, and local governments. Of these, the Library Service Division of the United States Office of Education is

¹E. S. Griffith, *The Modern Government in Action* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), pp. 78-81.

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potentially, perhaps, the most important. Since it is the national center for public library statistics, the Division is well equipped to undertake studies of the over-all development of public library service. Its staff should include specialists competent to undertake research of many kinds.² Likewise, many of the state library agencies or other state offices should become research centers for their respective states. The survey of the public libraries of New York, initiated in 1945 by the Division of Research of the State Education Department, is an outstanding example of library research by a state agency. Municipal research bureaus, whether officially parts of municipal government or not, may also devote increasing attention to public library affairs. Several examples of library investigations by state or municipal agencies may already be cited.³ The staffs of these agencies are experts in research methods and may be able to bring a fresh approach to the study of library problems. One of the most important of these municipal studies is the survey of library service in New York recently sponsored by the New York City Planning Commission.⁴

The library schools, particularly those with programs for advanced study, are also potentially important centers for research in the public library field. Faculty members interested in public library problems should be encouraged to undertake research projects themselves and to direct theses and studies by competent students.⁵ The awarding of fellowships, scholarships, or special grants to practicing librarians and to potential public-library leaders for study and research at advanced library schools should be encouraged in every way possible.⁶

² Paul Howard, "Whither A.L.A.?" *A.L.A. Bulletin*, XL (October 1, 1946), 304-8.

⁸ Los Angeles, Cincinnati, and Texas are examples.

⁴ New York City Planning Commission, *Program for the Public Libraries of New York City*. Prepared under the direction of Lawrence M. Orton by Alfred Morton Githens and Ralph Munn, Consultants (New York: City Planning Commission, 1945).

⁵ An example is the series of "Community Studies in Reading," by faculty and students of the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago. This includes the Lower East Side (New York), Hinsdale, Illinois, Queens Borough (New York), and Alliance, Ohio. *Library Quarterly*, III (1933), 1-20; V (1935), 1-30; VI (1936), 1-33; IX (1939), 72-86.

⁶ American Library Association. Committee on Fellowships and Scholarships, *Education for Librarianship: Grants-in-Aid Financed by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1929-1942* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1943).



Individual public libraries may also undertake or sponsor research. Surveys of libraries, whether made by the library's own staff or by outside specialists, employ research techniques and may be valuable contributions to available factual data regarding public libraries. As techniques for self-surveys are perfected, it may be anticipated that many libraries will undertake surveys of their own services and functions. Research assistants competent to analyze and evaluate the operations of libraries should be employed as regular staff members of large library systems. The development of a center for the tabulation of statistics on library use and community reading at Montclair, New Jersey,⁷ suggests the possibility of establishing similar centers in selected communities of different types. Other libraries might be used as centers for the study of projects of different kinds.

A closely related device is the experimental or demonstration library. Perhaps many large public library systems should have "experimental" branches, such as the South Chicago Branch of the Chicago Public Library,⁸ in which new ideas and plans of many sorts may be tested in practice. The need for demonstration libraries has already been mentioned in Chapter V of this report.⁹ Here it may be emphasized that the research opportunities of library demonstrations should not be overlooked. Whenever demonstration projects are undertaken, essential records of costs and services should be kept, results should be carefully recorded and evaluated, and findings published.

The American Library Association is also an important center for public library research. It has to its credit, for example, an early study of special interest in the field of library extension,¹⁰ and it collected much of the factual data used in the present report. Numerous public library surveys have been made under its auspices.

⁷ Montclair Public Library, *Central Records Control by Punched Cards* (Montclair, New Jersey: 1942). See also Margery Quigley, "Library Facts from International Business Machine Cards," *Library Journal*, LXVI (December 15, 1941), 1065-67.

⁸ Lowell Martin, "Outline of Experimentation in the South Chicago Branch Library" (Chicago: Chicago Public Library, December, 1940). Mimeographed.

⁹ See p. 70.

¹⁰ American Library Association. Committee on Library Extension, *Library Extension: a Study of Public Library Conditions and Needs* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1926).

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It should increase its research activities in the future. Some of the stronger state library associations may also be able to undertake research through their own committees.¹¹

Of the great educational foundations, the Carnegie Corporation of New York has been most active in sponsoring public library research projects. On April 14, 1947, the Corporation announced a grant of \$175,000 for a two-year study of the effectiveness of public library service in the United States and Canada, to be conducted under the direction of a special committee of the Social Science Research Council. This study, called "The Public Library Inquiry," is planned as a searching "appraisal in sociological, cultural, and human terms . . . of the public library's potential and actual contribution to American society." Its five major subdivisions will include: library functions and objectives, internal operations, governmental controls, present services, and relations of the library to new developments in the field of communication.¹² Library authorities and organizations should seek opportunities for enlisting the cooperation of other foundations in investigations of interest to public libraries.

Finally, the individual librarian should be encouraged to undertake research projects on his own initiative. Often he has at hand in his own library excellent raw materials for study and analysis. If his research projects are carefully planned, his findings may be interesting and valuable.

The foregoing enumeration of places in which research on public library subjects may be undertaken suggests at once the need for a clearinghouse of research projects planned or in progress. This function might be assumed by an Advisory Committee on Library Research, created under the joint auspices of the American Library Association, the Library Service Division of the Office of Education, and the Association of American Library Schools. This committee would keep records of research completed or in progress and would also stimulate the planning of a broad program of new research projects.

¹¹ See, for example, "Library Tasks: a Classified List, Revised, September, 1941, by the Library Standards Committee, California Library Association," *California Library Association Bulletin*, III (September, 1941), 21-27.

¹² "The Public Library Inquiry," *Library Journal*, LXXII (May 1, 1947), 698, 720-24.



BASIC STATISTICS OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Fundamental to research in the public library field is the collection and publication of basic statistics of library use and support. A good beginning has already been made in the cooperative use of uniform annual report blanks by state library agencies, the Library Service Division of the Office of Education, and the American Library Association. This plan for uniform reporting should be continued and perfected. The systematic compilation of public library statistics on a nation-wide plan should include the following elements:

1. Annual collection and publication by the various state library agencies of public library statistics for their respective states.
2. Biennial collection of statistics of the public libraries of the nation by the Library Service Division of the Office of Education. Some data might be collected and tabulated without publication but made available for research purposes through punched card or other mechanical devices.
3. Annual publication by the Library Service Division of statistics of a carefully selected sample of American public libraries to show short-range trends on a national scale.
4. Compilation by an appropriate agency of up-to-the-minute statistics of a small sample of good public libraries of different sizes, designed to show current trends in library registration and circulation. These data would be published in the form of index numbers calculated in relation to a base year. They would be somewhat comparable to the "Dow-Jones" averages of stock and bond prices. Their major purpose would be to inform librarians quickly and accurately of changing trends in library use, as shown by representative good libraries.

LIBRARY GOVERNMENT

Most plans for the expansion and improvement of library service necessarily depend to some extent on the place of the library in the governmental structure at the local, state, or national levels. Although some pioneer studies in this general area have been made,¹³ the field as a whole should be a fruitful one for research projects

¹³ C. B. Joeckel, *The Government of the American Public Library* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935).

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of many sorts. Both librarians and students of government and public administration should be interested in its research possibilities. Most attention has been given to the place of the public library in local government, but similar studies of the position of library services in the several states and in the national government are also of basic importance.

The following list of research projects is offered as an introductory suggestion to the many kinds of research needed in this field of library governmental relations:

1. Relations of the federal government to libraries and library service
2. State library relations, with special attention to the different types of state library agencies and their relations to local libraries
3. Federal and state grants-in-aid to public libraries, with suggested formulas based on economic ability, density of population, extent of urbanization, and other factors
4. Detailed studies of public library government in the several states
5. Historical treatment of the development of public library legislation
6. General analysis of public library legislation
7. Certification of librarians and its results
8. Civil service in relation to public libraries¹⁴
9. Evaluation of the trustee system of public library administration in action
10. Relations between public and school libraries, with special emphasis on integration of service

UNITS AND AREAS OF LIBRARY SERVICE

The plan of public library service proposed in this report rests squarely upon the organization of local library units large enough in size and income to give service of high quality. Therefore, research in the field of units and areas of library service is of special importance. Analysis of the organization of different types of larger library units should be the objective of one group of studies, with demonstrations and controlled experiments indicated as essential in determin-

¹⁴ Herbert Goldhor, "Civil Service in Public Libraries," *Library Quarterly*, XIII (July, 1943), 187-211; American Library Association. Subcommittee on Civil Service Relations, *Civil Service and Libraries* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1947).

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ing results. Another area of research should be concerned with methods of serving readers in large-unit libraries. Cooperation between libraries is a third major subdivision of this general field of investigation. Examples of research projects on this subject are the following:

1. Determination of the optimum size of the library unit¹⁵
2. County and regional libraries: organization and functions
3. Methods and results of extending library service by contract
4. Branches and stations in large-unit libraries
5. Library service through groups of cooperating libraries
6. Definitive study of automotive library service; advantages and disadvantages, methods, and costs
7. Effect of sparsity of population on methods and costs of library service
8. A geographical and governmental analysis of areas now without library service
9. Role of the central library in extending service to rural areas
10. Library service in schools and community centers

LIBRARY FINANCE

Most problems of library organization and service have obvious financial implications. Hence, many of the topics listed in other sections of this chapter might quite logically be repeated here under the head of finance. For example, there is the all-important question of federal and state aid to libraries, previously mentioned in the section on library government.

In general, the major problems of financial administration in public libraries fall into two groups: (1) library revenues and (2) costs of library functions and services. Research is much needed in both fields. In the first group, research studies should aim to show the general trends in library support and to analyze the different sources of library revenues. In the second group, cost accounting, the possibilities for research projects are almost unlimited, since practically every library function is a possible subject for analysis. One impor-

¹⁵ Lowell Martin, "The Optimum Size of the Public Library Unit," in C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Library Extension: Problems and Solutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), pp. 32-46.

tant general cost study¹⁶ has already been published, but additional investigations of the costs of many library functions may be projected.

The following list suggests topics for investigations in this field:

1. General history of the growth of public library revenues and expenditures
2. Sources of library revenues, with special reference to comparison of income from tax levies and from appropriations
3. Ratio of library expenditures to total expenditures for local government¹⁷
4. Per capita costs of major library services, e.g., information service, children's service, etc.
5. Unit costs of specific activities, e.g., comparison of circulation by mechanical or manual methods, reproducing catalog cards, etc.
6. Comparative costs of different types of organization, e.g., departmentation by subject *vs.* departmentation by function
7. Effect of cooperative effort on unit costs, e.g., on costs of purchasing and cataloging books
8. Methods of allocating book funds to departments and branches
9. See also financial topics included under "Library Government" and "Units and Areas of Library Service," preceding

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION

Thus far, this chapter has considered research in fields largely external to the library itself—government, service areas, and finance. But research is equally essential in the internal administration and operation of the library. Investigation in this field may well begin with a study of the public library's own research and staff functions, a subject which has had relatively little attention. The larger public libraries should perfect their own research techniques.

Administrative organization of the public library is another field in which research will have fruitful results. Full-length studies of the effectiveness and cost of different types of library departmentation are needed to guide administrators in planning the structure of their

¹⁶ E. V. Baldwin and W. E. Marcus, *Library Costs and Budgets; a Study of Cost Accounting in Public Libraries* (New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1941).

¹⁷ R. H. Deily, "Public Library Expenditures in Cities of over 100,000 Population in Relation to Municipal Expenditures and Economic Ability," *Library Quarterly*, XIII (January, 1943), 1-20. (Summary of unpublished doctoral dissertation with same title, Graduate Library School, University of Chicago, 1941).

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libraries. Detailed studies of the organization and internal administration of particular departments are very few in number.¹⁸ Likewise, there have been few investigations of the different types of branch libraries and deposit stations, including county as well as municipal agencies. Research of this kind should begin with accurate descriptions of the functions of the various library departments but should eventually attempt to evaluate the results of administrative procedures.

A few examples of research projects in the general field of library administration follow:

1. Staff and research functions in library administration
2. Evaluation of library service under different types of departmental organization
3. Administration of departments and functions in libraries: book selection, order, catalog, reference, service to children, readers' advisory service, etc.
4. Administration of branch libraries and extension systems
5. Organization and functions of different types of branch libraries
6. Experiments in modifying or eliminating the dictionary card catalog in libraries
7. Mechanization of routine procedures in circulation of books
8. Physical care and preservation of books and other library materials

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

In the general field of personnel administration in public libraries, two groups of research projects may be selected as examples for brief consideration. One of these research areas is the selection and training of library personnel. There is need for refined procedures in the selection of librarians for public library service. Satisfactory tests for evaluating intangible factors such as personality, social attitudes, and special abilities of high order, are yet to be developed. Tests of this sort are needed by libraries and also by the library schools, since

¹⁸ See, for example, M. R. Lucas, *The Organization and Administration of Library Service to Children* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1941); R. B. Phelps, "The Effects of Organizational Patterns on Reference Work in Three Typical Metropolitan Libraries: Boston, St. Louis, and Los Angeles" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Graduate Library School, University of Chicago, 1943).

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both institutions are deeply concerned with the selection of potentially qualified personnel. Further experiments are indicated with the available educational tests and also with specially devised tests for prospective librarians. Experiments may also be suggested in pointing library school curriculums and instructional procedures toward meeting the emerging needs of the public library as an active educational institution.

Another group of research projects is perhaps somewhat more practical in character. Clearer demarcation is needed between professional and nonprofessional duties, and the proportions of personnel required for each of the two groups should also be studied. Likewise, working formulas for the ratio of library staff members to population served in branches and in cities and communities of different size and types should be more exactly determined. Only a few of the possible subjects for investigation are included in the list which follows:

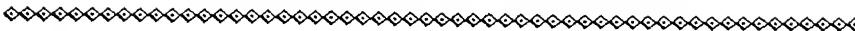
1. Testing techniques useful in selecting prospective librarians
2. Library education in relation to the emerging character of professional service in public libraries
3. Ratio of staff members to population served in branch libraries in cities of different size and in rural areas
4. Distinctions between professional and nonprofessional positions and duties in public libraries
5. Proportion of professional and nonprofessional personnel required in public libraries of different size
6. Analysis of programs of in-service training
7. Role of the staff and staff associations in public library administration

SERVICE TO READERS¹⁹

Since the major function of the public library is to serve readers, research in this field is of primary importance. Moreover, its potential scope is unlimited in extent. Almost any detail of library service is worthy of careful analysis and evaluation. Investigation in this field may profitably include numerous case studies of different func-

¹⁹ Arnold Miles and Lowell Martin, *Public Administration and the Library* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), pp. 246-90.

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tions in individual libraries. Thus, many studies may be directed at careful reporting of present services and their results, but others should be pointed at the future and the possibility of new and improved service methods.

Research on the subject of service to readers may appropriately begin with the analysis of the statistics of library use and the determination of standards of performance in service. Obviously, measurement of service must be related to standards.²⁰ It is important that uniform methods of counting and reporting statistics of library services be defined and used throughout the nation. Usually these mass statistics of library use relate primarily to registration of borrowers and circulation of books for home use, but other types of library service, particularly reference and readers' advisory service, should also be reported and analyzed. Studies of this type are usually quantitative measures of services rendered. They make little attempt to develop standards for measuring the *quality* of library service; neither do they attempt to tabulate and analyze the many *failures* in library service.²¹ Research on both these topics would yield important results.

Analysis of public library readers has already received much attention in research studies, but there are many opportunities for further investigation in this field. For example, the reporting by the United States Census of educational levels by political units and by census tracts makes possible interesting studies of correlations between library use and varying community levels of education. But it is not enough to study the users of libraries. Much more should be known about the great mass of people who do *not* use libraries. Research in this field might suggest many concrete plans for reaching new readers.

Much experimentation is required in methods of opening library resources to the nonscholarly reader. Bibliographic tools, such as reading courses and book lists, must be more specifically adapted to the needs of special groups. The value of the card catalog as a key to the library for the average reader should be studied. What modi-

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 249-58.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 285-86. See also John VanMale, "The State as Librarian," *Library Quarterly*, XIV (January, 1944), 36-46.

fications in card content and in methods of filing are required to make this expensive tool an instrument for the average library patron rather than for the scholar and the librarian? Methods of describing and evaluating the individual book also need further study.

In its current tentative experiments with the newer media of learning, particularly sound and visual materials, the library is entering a little known field which calls for extensive investigation. Controlled experiments should be arranged to determine the feasible methods of linking these newer materials to the collections of print on which the public library has almost exclusively relied in the past. Cooperation between librarians and producers of films is necessary to determine content and method of presentation best suited to the educational needs of the library. Equipment adapted to informal use and to the facilities of small libraries is also required. Likewise, methods must be devised for relating adult education programs and group activities of all kinds to reading and use of library materials.

Finally, public library service should be evaluated. It is generally assumed that the public library exists for the social good. But how much of its service is worth while, and what are the effects of service on the individual reader? Such questions have not been answered in detail. More studies are needed to explore the social contribution of the library.

The list of research subjects relating to library service might be greatly extended. The suggestions which follow should be considered only as an introduction to the subject:

1. Standards of performance and units of measure in service to readers
2. Uniform statistics of service
3. Standards for measuring *quality* of service performance
4. Standards and statistics of reference service in public libraries
5. Failures in library service
6. Analysis of public library users and nonusers by age, occupations, educational levels, income, and other factors
7. Experimentation in bibliographic tools for average readers
8. Detailed analysis of the use of the card catalog by different reader groups



9. Use of new media of library service: sound and visual materials, microfilm and microprint
10. Relating adult education programs and group activities to reading in the public library
11. Evaluation of the social contribution of public library service

BOOKS AND READING INTERESTS

Research in the basic field of the reading habits of the American people should be of the greatest interest to public librarians generally. Investigation in this area has already been more extensive than in any of the other fields considered in this chapter.²² Yet it is clearly the responsibility of the public librarian to master the essential findings of past research on this subject and to apply them concretely to the work of his own library. Although not in itself research, perhaps one of the most useful projects in the field would be a selective interpretation for the public librarian of the important results of previous reading studies. The necessarily brief comments which follow should be considered only as an elementary approach to a very large subject.

There is still need for additional case studies of popular reading interests, particularly in smaller cities and towns and in rural areas. One method of obtaining the necessary data might be to establish a selected group of "reading laboratories" with mechanical tabulating equipment, similar to the installation in the Montclair Public Library,²³ so that the collection and tabulation of factual data might be done quickly and cheaply. Many reading studies, on the other hand, may be made without the assistance of machines.

It seems likely that a major shift in the direction of reading studies is about to occur. Interest is shifting from "who reads what"²⁴ to "what reading does to people"²⁵—from the relatively simple tabulation of the kinds of reading done by different groups of readers to the

²² R. A. Beals, "Implications of Communications Research for the Public Library," in Douglas Waples, ed., *Print, Radio, and Film in a Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), pp. 159-81.

²³ Montclair Public Library, *op. cit.*, Margery Quigley, *op. cit.*

²⁴ Douglas Waples and R. W. Tyler, *What People Want to Read About* (Chicago: American Library Association and University of Chicago Press, 1931).

²⁵ Douglas Waples, Bernard Berelson, and F. R. Bradshaw, *What Reading Does to People* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940).



much more difficult analysis of the *effects* of reading on readers. The role which reading plays in the lives of urban and rural people is as yet too little understood. Despite its obvious difficulty, research in this general area promises results of fundamental importance to public librarians.

Another basic change in which the public librarian is deeply concerned is the current shifting in the relative importance of the three great forms of communication of ideas: print, radio, and film.²⁶ Any pronounced change in the balance between these three media of mass communication will profoundly affect both the scope and the methods of public library service. The interest of the public librarian, therefore, must necessarily be extended from research in reading to an almost equally active interest in all forms of mass communication.

Similarly, recent international and scientific developments appear to put new responsibilities upon all of the agencies for the dissemination of information and ideas and for the diffusion of knowledge. A study of libraries in relation to the other important agencies is indicated. It should disclose what library objectives and activities are likely to be of greatest significance, what fields can appropriately and confidently be left to the other forms of communication.

The book collection of the public library constitutes a field of investigation and research in which librarians have an immediate concern. Graduate library schools have already tested several methods of evaluating book and periodical collections. These methods should be further refined for application to libraries of different types, sizes, and purposes, and also to varying reader needs. Obsolescence of the book collection is another subject for research which today is forcing itself upon the attention of most public libraries.

The lack of reading materials suited to the adult with limited educational background and reading ability has already been mentioned in a previous chapter.²⁷ Close cooperation with publishers over an extended period of time should result in production of readable books, keyed to various reading levels, but written from the adult

²⁶ Douglas Waples, ed., *Print, Radio, and Film in a Democracy*, *op. cit.*; H. C. Link and H. A. Hopf, *People and Books: a Study of Reading and Book-buying Habits* (New York: Book Industry Committee, Book Manufacturers Institute, 1946).

²⁷ See pp. 110-11.

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standpoint. These are needed in practically every subject field in much greater numbers than are now available.

A few of the possible subjects for research in the field of books and reading are listed below; they should be considered as broad fields for investigation rather than as specific research projects:

1. Reading interests of the American people
2. Effects of reading: what reading does to people
3. Role of reading in the lives of people: in large cities, small towns, and rural areas²⁸
4. Print in relation to other media of communication
5. The public library in relation to other agencies for the diffusion of knowledge
6. Methods of evaluating the library's book collection
7. Obsolescence of the public library book stock
8. Publication needs: subjects and educational levels of books needed for different types of readers
9. Educational films: subjects and educational levels needed for different types of people

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that research about public libraries and their problems is of many types, that it may be conducted by many different agencies, and that it may deal with a wide variety of subjects. In a report on public library planning, it is appropriate to repeat the recommendation that an Advisory Committee on Library Research be created as a national clearinghouse for research projects and plans.

It is just as important to plan the research program for the American public library as it is to plan the organization of the library system—perhaps even more important. Research will gradually produce the materials on which the basic decisions regarding library policy, organization, and functions may be safely founded. It will also supply the sources for generalizations in the form of comprehensive monographs and textbooks on all phases of library operation.

Many of the unsolved problems of public library operation lie in

²⁸ J. G. Hodgson, "Rural Reading as Supplied by Land-Grant Colleges and Libraries" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Graduate Library School, University of Chicago, 1946).

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the difficult but important field of social evaluation. Solutions in many cases must wait upon further development in methods of investigation. In other areas, however, significant contributions to our knowledge of libraries have already been made. Nevertheless, additional studies of many kinds are required, with applications to libraries of varying sizes and types. Solutions to many of the problems mentioned in this chapter will add greatly to the efficient operation of libraries. Answers to others might conceivably revolutionize our concept of the purpose of the public library and redirect many of its efforts.

CHAPTER XIII

Essential Features of a National Library Plan

POTENTIAL ROLE OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC LIBRARY

THIS plan for the postwar public library in America is based on the conviction that the library should live up to its potential. It assumes that the high quality of service already achieved in some communities could be achieved in every part of the country if organization were perfected and support adequate.

The good public library of today performs a unique and significant educational function. Its service is founded on the printed page, the form of communication best suited to individual study, but it supplements the printed page with the new media of communication—films, recordings, radio, forums. It is the one agency that has time and ability to assemble the best from the output of the printing press and the film laboratory. The unit result of library services is not spectacular, but multiplied a millionfold in every section of the country, it is significant in personal fulfillment and a better group life.

In essence, the objectives of the public library are two: to promote enlightened citizenship and to enrich personal life. Every library should have a clear sense of purpose, a sense of the reading process, and a sense of community identification. It should formulate an individualized statement of objectives fitted to the special needs of its own community.

TAKING STOCK OF THE LIBRARY TODAY

At its best, the American public library is an institution of social power and importance. In its good public libraries, the United States has made an outstanding contribution to democracy in action.

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But there are serious deficiencies in present-day public library service, taken as a whole. Frankly stated, they may be summarized as follows:

Thirty-five million people in the United States have no public libraries.

Most public library administrative units are too small—in population served, in total income, and in income per capita.

Many state library agencies are inadequate.

Personnel deficiencies are serious.

Many library buildings are outmoded and outgrown.

Total library income is insufficient and unequally distributed.

Library service in general, because of these conditions, is seriously below accepted standards in quantity and quality.

This postwar plan recognizes these deficiencies. It proposes a pattern of organization designed to strengthen library service in action.

PATTERNS OF LOCAL ORGANIZATION

The goal of the national library plan is to bring into the life of every American an adequate, purposeful public library. The core of the plan is the pattern of strong local library units which are the first line of service to the people. But the program here outlined can be achieved only by the joint efforts of local, state, and federal governments.

Public library service in the United States should be provided by approximately 1,200 effective library units, each with a minimum annual income of not less than \$37,500. Because of marked governmental and social differences between states and regions, it is inadvisable to prescribe a uniform pattern of local library organization generally applicable to all parts of the country. Instead, six possible patterns of satisfactory library units are recognized:

1. *Independent municipal libraries in cities of over 25,000 population.* In many instances, however, these now-separate city libraries are the natural centers for county or regional library systems.
2. *County libraries serving the entire area of large counties.* This

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unified type of organization is specially adapted to counties in which rural population is large.

3. *County libraries serving parts of large counties.* In this type one or more city or town libraries remain outside the county unit, but gradual consolidation into single county units may be anticipated.
4. *Regional or multicounty libraries comprising two or more counties.* This type of library unit, organized about a principal trading center, should develop greatly in areas in which counties are small in population or low in taxpaying ability.
5. *Federated groups of cooperating libraries.* These informal co-operating groups are indicated in regions in which there are already numbers of well-established public libraries.
6. *State library services*, such as state regional districts or branches of the state library agency. These may be used in states with numerous small libraries or in very sparsely populated areas.

ROLE OF THE STATE

The great library task of the state is to sponsor the development of an efficient and integrated *system* of public libraries available to all its people. The local public library is the first line of library service; it is the responsibility of the state to provide the second line.

The state should insure a strong legal foundation for its public libraries by constitutional or legislative provisions which recognize public library service as a state concern and make the establishment of public libraries mandatory.

The state library agency should be well financed and capable of furnishing dynamic leadership. It should fix and enforce standards of library performance. It should provide an integrated system of auxiliary services supplementing the facilities of local libraries.

Through grants-in-aid to public libraries, the state should insure at least a minimum level of library support within its boundaries. State aid should be used to equalize the differences in taxpaying ability within the state and also to stimulate the organization of larger units of library service.

The state should strive continuously to improve the quality of its library personnel through certification laws and regulations and through programs of in-service training.

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NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The federal government, in the national library plan, should play an important but auxiliary role. It should aid public libraries by services and by subsidies, but it should not attempt, directly or indirectly, to control local library service.

The Library Service Division of the United States Office of Education should be greatly strengthened in staff and functions so that it may furnish effective leadership in the extension and improvement of library service throughout the nation.

The federal libraries should provide a carefully organized system of bibliographic and other services designed to supplement the services of state and local libraries. These should include:

- A national bibliographic center in the Library of Congress
- A complete and current national bibliography of American publications
- Catalogs and indexes of federal, state, and local documents and laws
- Free distribution of public documents in quantities sufficient to meet actual needs
- A repertory of printed catalog cards specially designed for public library use
- Continuation of service to the adult blind in the Division for the Blind in the Library of Congress, with grants-in-aid to cooperating regional libraries

The federal government should make grants-in-aid to public libraries in a number of forms:

- Annual grants increasing from \$15 to \$30 million, based primarily on need, and designed to insure a high nation-wide level of public library service. Grants for library demonstrations may precede or accompany the system of permanent grants-in-aid
- Grants for "maximum" library service to twenty or more metropolitan libraries in their respective regions
- Grants for library buildings as part of public works programs

COORDINATION OF SERVICE

The movement toward formally organized larger units of library service should be accompanied by the systematic coordination of

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existing library resources and functions. Public libraries should cooperate actively with other public libraries and also with other types of libraries.

Comprehensive schemes of library coordination should include the following essential features:

Direction by a council of library administrators

Definite agreements concerning fields of specialization in library holdings

Reciprocity in circulation and other services to all users of the co-operating libraries

These devices of cooperation may be used in varied ways in different situations:

In the great geographic regions of the nation, the focus of coordination will be the regional bibliographic center.

In metropolitan districts, in groups of suburban towns, and in areas with numerous independent public libraries, the goal of cooperation should be the development of a common pool of services, freely available to the people of the region.

College libraries and public libraries located in the same communities should formulate plans for the effective coordination of resources and services which will mutually strengthen each institution in meeting the needs of its readers.

Cooperation between school libraries and public libraries should be emphasized, especially in small towns and rural areas where population is relatively sparse and tax resources are limited.

FINANCE

The national library plan rests upon adequate financing. Support of the public library should be guaranteed by sound legislation so that continuity of service may be assured.

At least \$200 million annually is required for the efficient operation of a nation-wide public library system. Only a combined program of support by local, state, and federal governments can be expected to raise a sum of this size. It is therefore proposed that this amount be distributed among the various government units concerned approximately in the following proportions: local units, 60

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per cent; states, 25 per cent; and federal government, 15 per cent.

Capital sums of \$500 million for new and reconditioned public library buildings and \$175 million for new and replenished book stocks should also be provided from funds allocated to public works programs.

BOOKS AND LIBRARY MATERIALS

The collection of books and other materials which the postwar American public library assembles for its users will be at once traditional in form and content and yet materially different.

The bibliographic spread of the collection of the large-unit library will be greater than that of the group of small libraries it replaces. It will contain more titles in its book stock, and the number of titles available to serious readers will be further increased by closer cooperation between libraries.

The public library of tomorrow will duplicate important titles on a large scale and will distribute widely paper-bound editions of books and pamphlets.

The most striking change in library content will be the greatly increased supply of audio-visual materials, such as:

Pictorial and graphic materials

Music recordings and scores

Recordings for instruction and literary appreciation

Educational films

Microfilms of newspapers, official records, and books not readily available

The postwar library should strongly emphasize its educational objective and should correspondingly de-emphasize the purely diversional aspects of its recreational objective. This general change in policy will result in a corresponding change in its collection. The library will discard or send to regional storage reservoirs its obsolescent books and materials.

Not content merely to distribute printed materials now available in the book trade, the public library will actively influence the publication of new types of books and pamphlets needed in its program of adult education.

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PERSONNEL

An essential part of the postwar public library plan is the recruitment of a working force of librarians and other personnel adequate in number and of high qualifications.

Approximately 60,000 professional and nonprofessional staff members will be required to man the public libraries of the United States when library service of good quality is provided for all the people of the nation. About half of these will be professionals, the remainder nonprofessional assistants. As library units increase in size, the proportion of professionals on library staffs will tend to decrease.

The postwar public librarian should be prepared by a high level of general and professional education to play a positive educational role as a leader in the integration of books and community needs.

State laws for the certification of librarians, supplemented by local merit or civil service systems, are necessary to safeguard entrance into the profession of librarianship and advancement within it.

Enlightened personnel administration should be provided through direction by personnel officers, classification and pay plans, and the best methods and devices used in public service generally.

Salary schedules must be attractive to personnel of high quality in all grades of library service. Beginning salaries should adequately reflect increased living costs in the postwar period. Salaries should be supplemented by pension and welfare systems insuring financial security for old age or illness.

BUILDING PROGRAM

The national plan for public library service will gradually take shape in library buildings. The physical plant of the library will determine in large part both the quantity and quality of service rendered.

Responsibility for the preparation of detailed inventories of public library building needs rests largely upon the state library agencies and the larger local library systems. They should be prepared with careful estimates of the future building requirements of their states, counties, or cities. Whenever possible, library building programs should be integrated with general public works programs.

A capital outlay of not less than \$500 million will be required to

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meet postwar public library building needs. Among the major categories of building requirements are:

- New buildings to serve 35 million people in areas now without public libraries
- Additional branches in many city, county, and regional library systems
- Replacement, enlargement, and modernization of hundreds of obsolescent library buildings

The standard types of public library buildings should be studied and perfected as units in a planned system of library service. Some of the most important types of buildings are:

- The central library and headquarters for city, county, and regional libraries
- Regional branches in large city and county library systems
- Community branches in cities or counties
- Public library branches in community centers and schools
- Regional reservoir libraries for the cooperative storage of obsolescent or little-used books

In planning the public library building of the future, the following principles are basically important:

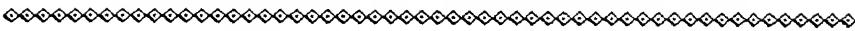
- The library building should be easily accessible and attractive to readers.
- The building plan should conform to the technical and service functions performed by libraries.
- Many public library buildings should be adaptable for expanded service in county or regional library systems.
- The public library building of the future should be planned and equipped as a modern educational center.

CITIZEN AND LIBRARY

The American public library is an expression of American democracy in action. If library planning is to succeed at any level of government, active citizen support is essential.

The relation between the citizen and his public library is a mutual obligation between two parties to a jointly useful contract. The

ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF A NATIONAL LIBRARY PLAN



library exists to serve the citizen as an individual or as a member of many different groups. The citizen, on his part, may aid the library in many ways: as an individual, as a library trustee, or as an organization member.

A characteristic feature of the American public library system is the great body of thousands of library trustees who represent the people of their communities in the development of efficient library service. With their administrative officer, the chief librarian, they are responsible for the formulation of library objectives and policies and for the presentation of the library's fiscal needs to tax-levying agencies. Locally and nationally, their role will be of continuing importance.

"Friends of the Library" organizations are particularly effective in helping to interpret the public library program to the community and the state and in securing adequate financial support for library service.

RESEARCH

Research is an indispensable foundation for public library planning and for the further development of library service. It will gradually produce the facts on which the basic decisions regarding the policy, organization, and functions of the public library may be safely founded.

Research in the public library field may be conducted by many different agencies, including governmental authorities, library schools, the American Library Association, educational foundations, and many individual libraries and librarians. As a national clearinghouse for research projects and plans, an Advisory Committee on Library Research should be created by joint action of the interested agencies.

Fundamental to research in many subdivisions of the public library field is the collection and publication of the basic statistics of library use and support. These statistics should be made available at regular and frequent intervals by cooperative action of local, state, and federal authorities.

Some of the more important areas for public library research may be enumerated as follows:

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Governmental relations of public libraries
Units and areas of library service
Public library finance
Internal administration of libraries
Personnel administration
Service to readers in all its aspects
Books and reading interests

The results of investigation in these fields will add greatly to the efficient operation of libraries and may change materially existing concepts of the purpose of the public library.

CONCLUSION

This library plan should be recognized for what it is—a general guide to the organization of public library service throughout the United States. It is not a detailed prescription of precisely how service is to be provided in every state, every county, and every city in the nation. It is proposed by the American Library Association for the thoughtful consideration of governmental agencies, library authorities, and librarians everywhere. They may approve, amend, or adapt it to their special needs. The plan need not be followed in detail, but it is hoped that the principles on which it is founded will have general application.

Above all, it is a *national* plan. It proposes a nation-wide minimum standard of service and support below which no library should fall. No community, on the other hand, is prevented from exceeding the minimum as much as it may desire. The plan places primary responsibility on the local library unit, but it provides for assistance from both state and nation through carefully integrated special services and generous grants-in-aid. All three levels of government should participate actively and steadily in advancing the plan.

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